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Engendering thought-fulness ... p. 12

Faith between crate and Canada ... p. 15

55th year of publication

Graham's presence felt at Amsterdam 2000

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OFFICIAL AMSTERDAM 2000 PHOTOS

Participants celebrate at opening ceremonies for Amsterdam 2000.

Alan Doerksen

AMSTERDAM — Even though Billy Graham was unable to attend Amsterdam 2000, his presence has been felt in a major way at the conference, which has been billed as his last major international event. Amsterdam 2000 was the largest international conference of evangelists and church leaders ever held, according to the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA), which set up and sponsored it. The event featured prominent Christian leaders such as John Stott, J.I. Packer, and Franklin Graham.

A total of 10,000 participants came to Amsterdam from more than 190 countries. Two-thirds of them came from developing countries, and many of these evangelists had to surmount major obstacles in order to attend the conference.

Difficult journeys

Candice Atherton, of Crosswalk.com, described in a recent column on the agency's website how some church leaders had to "walk for several days just to catch a bus to the airport. Some will travel by dugout canoe, donkey, bicycle or bus. One individual in the Amazon only comes out to get his mail once every four months." Atherton notes that many of these church leaders "have never been out of their country before, let alone having traveled on an airplane."

For many evangelists from the developing world, attending a conference such as Amsterdam 2000 would have been impossible without financial help. BGEA had a budget of $35 million for the conference, some of which went to pay for such participants to attend.

Franklin Graham addressing the Amsterdam 2000 conference.

"Every single thing BGEA has ever done has prepared us for Amsterdam 2000," commented Dr. John Corts, president of BGEA and general director of the conference, in late July shortly before the conference began. "We have established a network of religious leaders on six continents; they will assure the success of this event by selecting participants who will have the greatest impact on the task of worldwide evangelism." Out of 50,000 people who received applications for the conference, 10,000 were selected by BGEA to attend the event.

Graham unable to attend

Billy Graham had planned to address the opening session of Amsterdam 2000, but according to Crosswalk.com (which provided continuous coverage on the internet), "Shortly before he was to address the conference participants via satellite uplink, he felt he lacked the energy and the strength, following a sleepless night, to deliver his opening remarks.... He greatly appreciated his son, Franklin, standing in to read his statement and providing an update on his health."

The 81-year-old evangelist is receiving outpatient care for fluid build-up in his brain at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn. According to Baptist Press, Graham said, "I am disappointed at this turn of events, but I have great peace that this is God's plan for me and for the Amsterdam 2000 conference. I have experienced several deep spiritual

See **WORLD** *page 2...*

Amsterdam 2000 participants are welcomed as they arrive.

It's a dangerous life for missionaries, relief workers in West Africa

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — There is no escaping the fact that life is dangerous for North American missionaries and relief workers based in West Africa. But agencies such as Wycliffe Bible Translators, the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) and Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) are committed to continue their work there, despite the danger, and have set up safety guidelines for their workers.

Jan Disselkoen is a Canadian who has been working in Niamey, the capital city of Niger, with CRWRC, putting together civic education programs, and is currently spending some time in Canada to work on her Master's degree in adult education. Political instability is "a Third World phenomenon in a lot of ways," she observes. Even though she finds Niger to be "extremely peaceful," she adds that it is normal for people to have guards watching their homes in Niger and other countries of West Africa. Guards also do other work, such as gardening.

Coups and banditry

"There's a lot of danger of coups," in West Africa, says Disselkoen. She was in Niger during the last one. That coup was "between military and military." Generally, "there's more weapons available in West Africa compared to before," she says.

Banditry is a particular problem in Niger and Nigeria, she says. "In Niger, there have been a lot of stories of people wounded or shot in connection with a robbery." Sometimes bandits work with the compliance of border guards, so "people on borders are afraid."

While Disselkoen was working in Sierra Leone some time ago, once she was robbed during the night. "The guy snuck into the compound," she reports. "The doors were locked." Although

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News

World needs to be re-evangelized each generation, says Graham

... *continued from page 1*

moments during my hospitalization and feel that God has given me new vision and new strength for extended ministry in the future."

Reading his father's words during the opening session, Franklin Graham said, "I deeply regret the circumstances that have kept me from being with you. Be assured, however, that I will be with you in spirit and prayer throughout the conference."

In Billy Graham's address, read by his son, he outlined the main reasons for the conference. "Let me suggest that you have come together for one main reason: to discover how you can be more effective in extending the Kingdom of God on earth. This, after all, is the essential reason for our existence as Christ's servants." To accomplish this, Graham suggested delegates reaffirm four things: their commitment to the truth of the Gospel, the priority of evangelism, their dependence on prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit, and their determination to use every tool God has given them to proclaim the Gospel.

"The Bible is the source of our message, and we must be certain we are preaching nothing less — and nothing more — than that biblical message of Christ's death and resurrection for us," Graham asserted. "That is why I never hold an evangelistic crusade without preaching at least one sermon on John 3:16."

Evangelism top priority

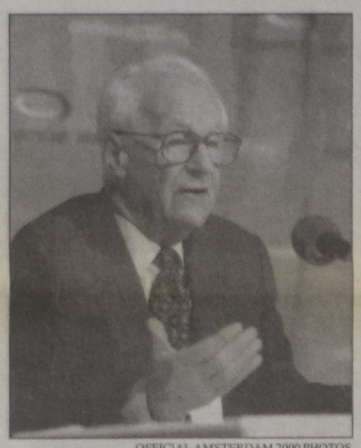
Evangelism must be a top priority, he emphasized. "If the Gospel is true, then telling it to others demands nothing less than first place in our lives and our ministries.... Of course, winning the lost to a saving faith in Christ does not encompass everything the Church is called to do. We are called to make disciples.... We are also called to worship and to prayer, and we are called to compassionate service in our world.... However, in priority, evangelism comes first."

Graham pointed out: "We sometimes forget that — at least humanly speaking — the Church is always only one generation away from extinction. The world needs to be re-evangelized in every generation."

Speaking about prayer, Graham said, "Prayer forms the foundation of every great work of God. Intercession strikes the downbeat that sets the heavenly choir singing. Often I have been asked what I believe is the secret of success in evangelism, and I have replied that it consists of three things: prayer... prayer... and prayer!"

Modern technology should be used to advance the Gospel, Graham suggested. "The early Church had nothing in the way of advanced technology, but they used every method at their disposal.... Someone reminded me recently that when we last held a conference like this 14 years ago, we had no fax machines or cell phones or e-mail or Internet to help us. Think what changes the next 14 years could bring! Technology is not everything, but it is a gift God has given us in this generation to assist us in proclaiming the Gospel to the ends of the earth."

Well-known church leaders focus on tasks and motives of evangelists



OFFICIAL AMSTERDAM 2000 PHOTOS

Rev. Dr. John Stott

Alan Doerksen

AMSTERDAM — Amsterdam 2000 featured a Who's Who of world-renowned evangelists, church leaders and scholars, including John Stott, J. I. Packer, Korea's Rev. Billy Kim, and Anne Graham Lotz, daughter of Billy Graham. But rather than preaching to the converted, these featured speakers focussed on what are the key tasks, motives and messages of evangelists.

Stott: Bible is central

Rev. Dr. John Stott — evangelist, biblical scholar and rector emeritus of All Souls Church in London, Eng. — made it clear in his address that "the Bible is the only base on which the authentic evangelist builds his ministry and message. The Bible is indis- pensable to all true evangelism. Without the Bible, evangelists would have nothing to say, nothing worth listening to, and no hope of success." Transcripts of Stott's and others' speeches were obtained from Crosswalk.com's Amsterdam 2000 website.

Stott outlined three reasons why the Bible should be central to evangelism. "First, it has rich Gospel content, for it is God's good news for sinners. It concentrates on the atoning death and glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ. Secondly, it breathes an authority which compels attention and even assent. It rings true. Thirdly, it has liberating and transforming power. It sets people free."

But Stott pointed out that Christians' commitment to the Bible will arouse hostility in some people. "If we love the Bible because we love Christ, others love neither. On the contrary, they are hostile to Christ. So if in our evangelism we focus faithfully on Christ... we are bound to suffer for our testimony." Stott cited three main causes for hostility to the Gospel:

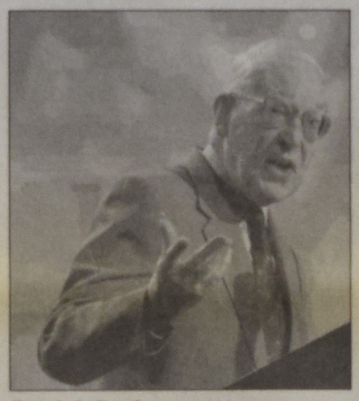
"The first concerns the uniqueness of the Gospel of Christ. In our increasingly pluralistic cultures, our insistence on Jesus as the only saving name causes great offence, and I fear that the offence will increase as pluralism spreads.

"Secondly, there is the freeness of the Gospel... Proud human beings would give anything to be able to earn their salvation, or at least contribute to it. To be told that it is a non-contributory gift, absolutely free and utterly undeserved, is extremely humiliating to people's arrogant self-confidence. This is the stumbling block of the cross.

"Thirdly, the high moral standards of the Gospel of Christ are another stumbling block. People love their sinful ways and want to be left alone in them. They resent the Gospel call to holiness and to surrender to Jesus as Lord."

Packer: content of Gospel

Dr. J. I. Packer, Professor of Theology at Vancouver's Regent College and a senior editor for *Christianity Today*, spoke on the content of the Gospel. "In the Bible, the Gospel is the entire saving plan of God, all revolving around the person, the place and power of our Savior Jesus Christ, the incarnate, crucified, risen, reigning, returning Lord. Preaching the Gospel requires us to show how Jesus Christ relates to every part of God's plan, and how every part of it relates to us who are savingly related to the living Christ through faith. Evangelism involves explaining life in Christ as well as inviting sinners to him."



Dr. J. I. Packer

Packer invited church leaders to examine their ministries in light of several questions, such as:

- How completely am I preaching the Gospel?
- Am I including the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in my preaching?
- Am I properly explaining the saving relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ?

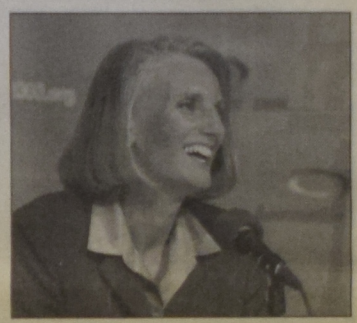
Kim: motives for evangelism

Rev. Billy Kim — president of the Baptist World Alliance and senior pastor of the 13,000-member Suwon Central Baptist Church in Suwon, Korea — spoke at the opening session of the conference about motives for evangelism. One key reason is the lawlessness of the world. "We used to talk about shopping sprees — but now it's shooting sprees," said Kim. He gave some examples of how lawlessness is rampant in the world. "Today, a terrorist kills scores of people and millions of dollars are spent tracking them, trying them and confining them. Assassinations and bombings kill and maim our leaders, our youth and our innocent children. I have been told that over 70 per cent of our Korean teenagers consider taking their own lives by suicide. Since 1980, the crime rate in my country has increased 72 per cent.... Only the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ can stop the lawlessness of the world. Therefore, we must preach the Gospel at all costs."

Another motive for evangelism is "the lostness of a person without faith in Jesus Christ. We cannot evangelize aright until we believe that the person outside of Christ is lost and undone, without hope in this world or the one to come.... A lost person is one who is unable to find the way, confused, helpless, ruined or destroyed physically, mentally, morally and spiritually."

Kim stressed that God's love is a key motivating factor for evangelism. "We evangelize because the love of Christ constrains us."

In an illustration, Kim compared Christian evangelism to the marketing work of Coca Cola. "They sell at least 800 million Cokes a day. The Coca Cola company has a great vision, a real goal, a strategy and a motto. The vision is: 'We see six billion points of light in a thirsty world. Six billion consumers in the world all being refreshed by Coca Cola.' ... A soft drink company with that determination and that vision puts Christians to shame. Out of a world population of six billion people, only 1.95 billion are Christians."



Anne Graham Lotz

Lotz: commitment to evangelism

Anne Graham Lotz, daughter of Billy Graham and founder of AnGel Ministries (a non-profit agency that communicates the Gospel through speaking, tapes and books), challenged conference participants to be committed to evangelism like the prophet Isaiah.

"Isaiah was absolutely committed to the Word of God," said Lotz. "Are you? When you preach, what do you preach? Isaiah didn't preach social issues unless they were an application of the Word. He didn't preach his own ideas and options."

Lotz explained how Isaiah's personal encounter with God led to his revival and a renewed commitment to serve God faithfully.

"Do you need a fresh vision of Jesus?" she asked. "Would you repent of your sin, specific sins as God brings them to mind? ... Don't leave this great conference without experiencing the cleansing blood of Jesus to wash away your sin." Lotz invited conference participants to recommit themselves to the call of God in their lives.

Agencies follow emergency guidelines

... continued from page 1

there were guards, they didn't notice the man climb a tree and cut a hole through the roof. The thief appeared in Disselkoen's room and asked for money. She gave it to him, and he escaped with a computer, VCR and television.

In Sierra Leone armed robbery is punishable by hanging. Perhaps because of this, she says, "In Sierra Leone, a lot of people have been killed because [thieves] don't want witnesses."

Another country which had a coup recently — last December — is Ivory Coast (Cote D'Ivoire). Because of that country's instability, several boarding schools for missionary children based there might be closing. "That would affect a huge number of missionaries in West Africa," asserts Disselkoen. But she notes that the tradition of missionaries sending their children to boarding schools is less common than it was. "It was automatic 20 years ago."

"I did a trip around West Africa in 1989," she says. On that trip, she observed that missionaries were facing several big questions including: "How are we going to educate our kids?"

ALAN DOERKSEN

Jan Disselkoen

Safety guidelines

Because of the dangers of working in West Africa, "there can develop a certain mentality among missionaries," says Disselkoen. "The news about any kind of problem spreads quickly. There's panic." However, "if being a missionary is about solidarity with people, leaving when the situation gets tough," she says, is a bad solution. "We have to have criteria and guidelines about whether to stay or not."

When she works in West Africa, she points out, "I'm a symbol of the West.... When you're in West Africa, you represent that culture to others. That's something that can be difficult to live with." For instance, she says, "If I were taken hostage, the whole world would hear about it."

"Our [the CRWRC's] policy is decisions regarding safety should be made as close to the field as possible. You've got to listen to your local people," says Disselkoen. She agrees that it is important for mission and relief agencies to have sets of guidelines for what to do in a crisis situation. If these agencies are going to work in West Africa, she says, "we should not have the illusion it's going to be safe." In December, Disselkoen will return to Niger.

Contingency committees

Canadian missionary Colin Suggett and his family have been working with Wycliffe Bible Translators in the West African country of Burkina Faso since 1991. Colin and his wife, Dorothy, have been translating the Bible into the Turka language, in the southwest of Burkina Faso. Their two children go to a boarding school in Ivory Coast.

Wycliffe has some international workers who do contingency planning on safety issues, says Colin Suggett. Each country where Wycliffe works has a contingency committee. "The contingency committee would cover cases from an increase of robberies in an area to full-scale unrest to evacuation." Part of contingency plans would be to contact foreign embassies and "heed that advice," and to get advice from Wycliffe's international office.

Suggett observes that although many missionaries send their children to boarding schools, it's not the most common option. "It all depends on your location. In Niger, most families opt for home schooling."

Terry Scruggs, co-ordinator of Wycliffe's Partners with Nationals program based at the national office in Calgary, says that Wycliffe missionaries working in West Africa have guards at their compounds, not just for safety but also as "an employment opportunity for people in the country."

Most foreign missionaries working in West Africa have guards, but so do local businesses there, she notes. Missionaries tend to live together in compounds in African cities, but in smaller places they tend to live more on their own, she says. Contingency plans for the safety of missionaries are "getting to be more common," says Scruggs. "They're really localized. Every country would look at its own situation."

Safety rules for CRWRC, CRWM

Alan Doerksen (with files from Henry Hess)

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) and the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) have strict guidelines for dealing with emergencies.

CRWRC's International Handbook for Overseas Staff outlines six levels of risk involving its workers in developing countries. Level 1 risk consists of normal risks such as tropical diseases and poor medical care. Level 2 refers to political unrest involving armed conflict and suspension of citizens' rights.

Level 5 involves situations in which a person is specifically targeted for a threat, directly or indirectly, and level 6 refers to civil war, when everyone is in a high-risk situation.

According to the handbook, "Any risk above Level 1 demands an assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of evacuation of personnel and/or families. When levels five and six occur, staff can ordinarily no longer be effective in their work, and the risk of injury or death to them is clear. Therefore, at these levels staff will be evacuated."

CRWM's policies on emergencies include these:

"Missionaries must be alert to the necessity to be cautious regarding their own safety. CRWM instructs its personnel to report immediately incidents of a threatening nature, surveillance or crime, to the field or project leader.

"In the event of threats to the life of any missionary, the field or project leader and the program director shall use every legitimate, prudent means, including immediate evacuation if necessary, for the safeguarding of the missionary.

"In order to most fully protect our missionaries from abduction ... in the event that any missionary be abducted and that a ransom be demanded, the policy of the mission is that no ransom be paid."

Charges dropped against journalist covering pro-life demonstration

CC Staff (with files from Sue Careless)

TORONTO — After nine and a half months of uncertainty and 13 court appearances, Sue Careless was informed that the charge against her was dropped because "there is no reasonable possibility of a conviction" and because charges against two other journalists also arrested at the time had been dropped five weeks earlier. Sue Careless was arrested October 15, 1999 when she was covering a pro-life demonstration outside an abortion clinic. Only one of the demonstrators was arrested at the time, but three journalists covering the event were charged with obstruction even though they showed the officers their press credentials. Police also confiscated their cameras and film.

In a press release Ms. Careless charges: "I was never given full disclosure of the evidence that was to be used against me as is required by law. I never received photocopies of all the relevant pages of the arresting officer's notebook."

Violation of freedom of press

Constitutional legal expert, Peter Jervis, called the arrest and prosecution of Sue Careless "an unwarranted and unconstitutional violation of freedom of the press." For the police to arrest a journalist on a public street who is simply covering and photographing a public event simply on the basis that she refused to leave when asked to do so by a police officer, is in his view unacceptable in a democracy. For the police to seize and hold her film of the event is an unconscionable violation of press freedom.

The Periodical Writers Association of Canada (PWAC) expressed alarm about the erosion of freedom of the press in Canada. "This was first and foremost an issue of freedom of the press," said Ms. Careless. PWAC immediately wrote a letter of protest, pointing out that journalists were protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, "which gives writers, journalists and photographers the right to peacefully and legally report on news events."

When charges against Ms. Careless had not yet been dropped, the PWAC wrote an open letter to the Crown Attorney demanding to know "why the charge against Ms. Careless had not been dropped and what reasons the Crown had for prolonging this matter for such an unreasonable period of time." Members of the writing community also deluged the Crown Attorney with letters of protest.

Ms. Careless stressed: "Journalists must have access to public property to cover news stories. All journalists should be able to cover controversial stories without fear of intimidation by the authorities."

Everyone expressed relief that the charges were finally dropped. "However," added PWAC President Kathe Lieber, "we are very alarmed by the increasing incidents of harassment that journalists are experiencing at the hands of police officers, and the erosion of the fundamental right to freedom of the press in this country. It is not up to the police to decide what events should or should not be reported on by journalists, and the writing and publishing community must remain vigilant and persistent in its opposition to state-imposed restrictions of the public's right to news and information."

Greek Orthodox Church seeks to maintain power

GREECE (Religion Today) — Greece has again angered the powerful Greek Orthodox Church. The government formally removed information about religious affiliation from state identity cards this week, an action it had planned for several months. That angered the church, whose leaders say the government is trying to strip it of its special status as the national religion and separate the church from the state, like much of the rest of Europe, according to The Associated Press.

The church is trying to collect five million signatures — half the population — to force a national referendum on the decree, even though the government has said it will not hold one. Some clergy said they hope the government will collapse because of the campaign and a series of mass rallies held last month, AP reports. All Greeks are required to have the identity cards from age 14. The government decree also abolishes fingerprint, occupation, and spousal information, but adds blood type.

Editorial

Institutions cannot laugh – especially not at themselves
(What? Not another apology!)

Harry der Nederlanden

As we were putting the finishing touches on our last issue, I received an air mail letter from Calvin Theological Seminary. We were firmly, but politely, told that Calvin Seminary is *not amused* by something we carried in our humor issue: the parody of their ad fashioned by some creative Calvin College students for a satirical issue of the student paper, the *Chimes*. At CC we've been going out of our way lately to encourage the talents of the younger generations, and I was sure, dead sure, that the ad in question was a product of great talent. It registered high on our chucklemeter.

Does the law forbid caricature?

But an institution cannot, may not, will not laugh. It's not that the staff at the seminary cannot laugh; it's the institution, the corporate body created by law, that cannot laugh. The ad parody is a violation, we are told, of *copyright laws*. Does the law forbid caricature?

Caricature, satire and parody depend on our ability to locate the object of laughter somewhere in the real world. My question to Calvin Seminary is this, and it is a serious question: How are we to laugh together at the double-binds, the strange knots we tie ourselves in if we cannot copy and pervert (just a little) the symbols of Serious Authority?

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Pastors, and, I presume, theology professors often speak of vulnerability as a good thing. Is clothing yourself, your corporate Self, in the invulnerable cloak of the law a good thing?

(Yes, yes, the "sincere apology" which You demanded is coming, because a paper like ours cannot afford even the smallest fraction of a lawyer's fees. You have the power to put us out of business tomorrow, so we are very much into sincerity on this matter. That's why I capitalize "You".)

A parody of ourselves

What bothers me, however, is that I've contributed to give You this power. My own hand is raised against me! But maybe that's appropriate. You see, the parody of *Calvinist Contact* was aimed at *ourselves,* at how we inflate ourselves by taking our Calvinist ideas (and institutions) too seriously. We need to be reminded that they are partly products of our sinful impulse to protect our precious self-image. We made the *sincere* mistake of assuming that Calvin Seminary was part of ourselves, part of *our* identity too. We were not laughing at something "out there," at something we couldn't identify with; we were laughing at something that we CRCers here at CC sacrifice to support. (We don't really like to sacrifice but our wages are so low that anything we give becomes a sacrifice.)

Is parody destructive, hostile act?

Your letter assumes that parody and laughter are destructive, hostile acts. Do You really believe this? Or are You being insincere? I find it hard to believe that you wish to align yourself with the enemies of caricature, satire and parody. Or do You, as a *Divinity* school, wish only to claim an exemption for yourself?

Tell us, in all sincerity, don't You feel, just the tiniest little bit, that there's something funny about being put in the position of recruiting women for the seminary while church polity bars them from serving as pastors? That is not, to be sure, something You, dear Institution, have done. It was done to You. And for that we are sorry. We are sorry You were put in such a contradictory, ludicrous position. But must we now also apologize for having a little chuckle at our own folly?

Personally, I believe that laughing at ourselves (you and me) for painting ourselves into such a corner – and inviting our youth to laugh with us – gets us further than invoking the serious powers of the LAW.

But wait! On rereading your letter, I suddenly see that You — in all sincerity — are not bothered by the humor at all. You are merely concerned that our readers are so confoundedly dense that they will take the parody to be a *real* ad.

To make that mistake, our readers would have to assume that "Clone Seminary" is a misspelling of Calvin Seminary. They would also have to take as true, for example, the description of the M.A. program as "a two-year program specializing in Sunday School, potlucks, missions and church growth." Do You *really* think the Canadian members of the CRC are so cynical we believe there's a Professor of Potluck on staff?

Clearing the air

If that's the case, let me take this occasion to clear the air: in all sincerity I say that there's no institution in the CRC that Canadians love more than the seminary, for You have given gainful employment to a goodly number of Canadians (who might otherwise be getting into higher criticism or politics). Once in a great while, too, you have provided us with a laugh.

I hate to play the blame game, *but* if our readers did mistake the parody for a real ad, the fault is partly Yours. They never saw the Real Thing! Whereas You placed the original in other publications, You did not place it in CC. Was this an oversight, or were You afraid of being overrun by Canadian women? I assure You that some of the best writers for CC are women, and most of them have a pretty good sense of humor and irony. They've needed it.

However, to atone for any damage the phony ad may have done, we invite You to send us the Real Thing, and we will print it free of charge. If You wish, we will clearly label it thus: "**True, authentic, sincere ad inviting women to Calvin Seminary**" in large, bold type, so that even the most obtuse Canadian reader will recognize your — and our — sincerity.

I am deeply encouraged that your letter stresses sincerity so much, because in your logo, with its quote from Calvin, sincerity is linked with the heart. To be sincere, as Calvin realized, one must speak from the heart, so my apology must, like my laughter, come from the heart. Here it is:

I am sincerely sorry that our imitation of your ad was offensive to you.

I am also sorry that we were not able to give proper credit to the students who created it. They deserved some recognition but chose to labor in humble obscurity.

Some insidious voice may whisper in your ear that because it was given with a smile our apology is not sincere. Banish the thought. In the words of one sage: imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. We have been sincere from the beginning, in our imitation as well as in our laughter.

To those of our readers who thought the parodic ad was a real one and who may have been tempted to apply to Calvin Seminary on the basis of the information provided: we're sorry, but there is no Professor of Potluck at Calvin Seminary and they have no plans to hire one. Nevertheless, CC recommends Calvin as the best and most seriously Reformed seminary on the continent – even if you're a woman. Or a humorist.

"If your parody offend you, cut it off. Or apologize."

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Letters

Liberation and Reformed theology share commitment to social justice

I think I understand the concerns underlying Harry Antonides' reservations about Jubilee 2000 ("Can Jubilee spark a resurgence of faith?," CC July 24), expressed in response to John Hiemstra's report on the recent Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative (CEJI) conference in Toronto. As Vice-Chair of the conference planning committee I think I also understand something of the theological and political orientations of CEJI. I will respond to just two of the many issues raised in Harry's article — out of my experience with this movement over the last 18 months (and in a personal capacity).

Liberation theology, not liberalism

First, the dominant theology informing CEJI is not "theological liberalism," a dated perspective which is not significant in CEJI's thinking. Rather it is various forms of liberation theology, which arose as a critique of old-style theological liberalism. I have significant questions about both movements.

But liberation theology certainly shares with Reformed theology a commitment to action for social justice informed by the Gospel. This makes meaningful cooperation on issues such as debt cancellation possible. I was not equally enthusiastic about everything that took place at that conference. But to me its most remarkable aspect was the saturation of every day's proceedings with a rich and biblically-informed liturgy. The event was certainly not "humanist" in ethos. Among the most moving moments were testimonies by Christians from poor countries about how their biblical faith empowered them to keep faith with the Gospel in the face of severe hardship.

Second, Harry suggests that the rhetoric and policies proposed by CEJI "borrow heavily from the political left." It is true that debt cancellation, for example, has been advocated mainly by those perceived to be on the political left, and from my observations most active members in CEJI would be placed on that side of the spectrum. I don't think Harry is suggesting that this in itself rules out participation by Reformed people. Indeed I have always regarded it as part of the genius of a Reformed worldview that it refuses to be trapped by conventional left-right categories. This means, first, that our Christian social vision is likely to be distinguishable from both. And for just this reason I have long admired the work of Harry and others in the Christian Labour Association of Canada. But it also means that Reformed people possess the freedom to work with either the left or the right, or both at the same time, as circumstances require.

Harry's specific concern, however, is that the left sees the source of problems like third world debt to be "structural and political." But surely this can't be an adequate reason for such suspicion, since the political right also regards the source of such problems as structural and is equally committed to structural change (I say that with some feeling, having lived under 18 years of Thatcherism). It just wants to change different structures, e.g. corrupt governments rather than multinational corporations. Equally, it shouldn't concern us that the stances we take on the basis of what we believe to be biblical principles should be "politically correct." If campaigns like Jubilee 2000 really advance the cause of justice for the poor of the world, we shouldn't be deterred by such slogans.

There is indeed a legitimate debate about the political or economic merits of Jubilee 2000's proposals, but it won't centre on "theological liberalism." A Reformed worldview has a great deal to offer such a debate, and Harry's own voice needs to be heard in it. But to gain a hearing, it is helpful to begin by affirming what is good in those who will be our dialogue partners.

Two recent contributions which show the constructive role of Reformed and Evangelical perspectives are: Fred Van Geest, 'A Reformed Christian Perspective on Global Justice and Political Economy', *Pro Rege*, Sept.1999; and 'Good News for the Poor', an Evangelical Fellowship of Canada Background Paper, reprinted in *Justice, Wealth and the Market*, published by CEJI. I hope Harry might find something to affirm in documents like these.

Jonathan Chaplin
Senior Member in Political Theory
Institute for Christian Studies
Toronto, Ont.

CRC should work for justice with boldness and confidence

In a recent opinion piece, Harry Antonides questions the "upbeat tone" in the article I wrote for CC about the Jubilee Conference held in Toronto this May. He makes a number of observations, and I wish to respond to two of them.

First, he asks whether "there is a revitalization of Christian belief in Canada because of the impact of the Jubilee campaign"?

Taking the Bible seriously

The article does not claim a revitalization of faith in Canada, but simply states that the "Canadian church social justice movements" are taking the Bible seriously because of the way the Jubilee 2000 initiative has emphasized the centrality of biblical themes such as "jubilee," "justice," and "redemption in Christ." Some of the results of this biblical study are helpful, some less so. Furthermore, in secularist and materialist Canada, these church social justice groups are very small indeed. Their tiny memberships would not even register on the Canada-wide opinion polls that Mr. Antonides cites.

I believe it should always be a matter of joy and celebration when brothers and sisters in Christ want to drink deeply from the springs of living water! That is something the CRC and all denominations should eagerly participate in, with due care and a lot of prayer, of course.

Second, Mr. Antonides charges that the article also sets out "a course of action that is more in line with theological liberalism than with biblical religion."

The people interviewed in my article all strongly value the CRC's biblical, kingdom theology. But some lament that it is sometimes used and abused in the CRC to promote ends which the Scriptures simply do not support, e.g. conserving a self-satisfied materialistic lifestyle, separating us from the hurts and needs of our neighbors, and justifying our paralysis in the face of our secularistic and immoral mainstream society. If and when Reformed theology lends itself to such uses, it is in urgent need of renewal through Jesus Christ.

If some participants in the Jubilee Initiative can help nudge us out of these ruts, then the CRC should welcome this in the name of Christ's renewing power.

It is urgent at this needy hour in the history of Canada, that the CRC not be paralyzed with fear of becoming fundamentalist or liberal, but that we together move forward in boldness and confidence that the Holy Spirit will use us, and all fellow Christians, in the coming of His Kingdom of righteousness and justice. And when Jesus comes back to make all things new, let him find us in the trenches with and for our needy neighbors.

John Hiemstra
Associate Professor of Political Studies
The King's University College
Edmonton, Alta.

Apologies to Stockwell Day

In his column of July 10, Bert Hielema makes among others the following statement with reference to the Canadian Alliance Party: "it would prefer – as in the Old Testament – to stone the adulterers and homosexuals."

While your columnist has an engaging style of writing, such a comment... in my view is exceeding the bounds of fairness and common decency in journalism.

Thank you.

J. van Arragon
Hamilton, Ont.

Dear Mr. Van Arragon,

You're right. We apologize. I as editor should not have let the sentence slip by.

In a recent issue of the Globe and Mail *(Monday, July 31) Stockwell Day says that the charge that he's "anti-gay" derives from his conviction that private institutions that oppose homosexual practice should not be compelled to hire those who are openly homosexual no more than that the Roman Catholic Church should be compelled to ordain women priests, and from his conviction that marriage should be restricted to the union of a man and a woman.*

This puts most of us in the same camp with Day on these issues. Whatever our other disagreements, we have the responsibility to depict his position fairly.

Thank you for your reminder.

Harry der Nederlanden

We've got more letters on page 6. Check them out!

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Letters (continued)

Should women be involved in deciding the women-in-office issue?

I appreciate your coverage of the CRC Synod 2000 proceedings. I am very disappointed to hear that Synod was not able to move forward in welcoming women into all leadership positions in the church.

While I respect the desire to maintain *unity* in the church, and can appreciate the *wisdom* principle introduced to the discussion, I also believe that these principles cannot be placed above the principle of *justice*. It also seems to me that another concept is playing a role in the ongoing discussion on women in the church, namely the concept of power and control.

At the Synod meeting of 1995, it was decided to take five years to calm our emotions and to allow time for healing. We hoped and prayed that during those five years we would all be more ready to move forward with courage and in good faith.

Those five years have now passed. It has been decided that another five years are needed to help us move closer to a resolution.

I feel overwhelmingly discouraged and this leads me to question myself. Should I have done more during these past 5 years? Should I have continued to keep the role of women in church an active and pressing matter?

I did not do this. Instead, I took this time to work out my own feelings. I tried to find peace of mind and the ability to accept the reality that the time had not yet come. At the same time however, I trusted and hoped that change was on its way.

Nothing changed

But nothing changed. It seems to me that something went wrong these past 5 years. I am wondering what it is. Could it have something to do with the system in which we are trying to solve this problem, the set-up of the church? The very fact that women can not represent themselves directly on this issue is of concern.

Discussions at the decision making level in the church are held primarily on *behalf* of women and the voting at the Synod meetings is done *without* women. Yet it is all *about* women!

When a dominant group talks about and makes decisions for an unrepresented group, decision-making is likely to be biased and not representative. Can we expect anything to change in the next 5 years if we don't change the method of decision making as it exists now?

I also have concerns about the role that control and power play in the struggle to find agreement on the role of women. We all believe that the Bible is God's infallible and inspired Word, but we interpret the Bible differently. A debate inherently has power issues in it, and a debate on women in office does so in several ways. It involves different Bible interpretations and unequal gender representation.

Power is a scary word

Power is a scary word in the church. We seldom talk about power, unless it's about the power of God. Rather, we talk about humility and loving our neighbor as ourselves.

But in order to love our neighbors as ourselves, we have to have a self. Only when we know and love ourselves, can we love our neighbor. To learn to love ourselves is hard work! It involves struggles with power and control. We need to feel that, humanly speaking, we are in control of our lives and not out of control. We need to learn to claim our own power and use it to honor God and our neighbor!

Not taking control of others

The art of living has something to do with learning how to take control of our own lives and how *not* to take control of the lives of other people. It is important to find the right balance of power in our relationships. Each of our relationships calls for a different balance, depending on whom we are relating to — a parent, child, employer or friend.

Finding the right balance is a challenge we all face. How well we learn it depends on how good we are at honoring ourselves, truly believing that we are created in the image of God, and how fully we then, in turn, dedicate ourselves to reflecting the Spirit of God to other people, our neighbors.

So, if struggles with power and control are part of our lives, why would it be daring to say that in the church we also struggle with issues of power? I am claiming my own power by writing this article. I almost did not write it because someone strongly disagreed with me, but I have to write it.

I would like to see further discussions on two thoughts. How does the wisdom principle apply to the issue of power? How does the principle of unity apply to the issue of justice for women?

May God grant us all the wisdom and love to remain united in our search for truth and justice in the church.

Vicky Van Andel
Edmonton, Alta.

What's an alternative?

Assuming Mr. Antonides' comments and views are indeed, as suggested, so clearly superior in their expression of the "true faith," as compared to the views attributed to Dr. John Hiemstra Ph.D., then I'd be most curious to know whether in giving expression to his faith, Mr. Antonides supports the Jubilee initiatives. If not, then without any further rhetoric, what's Mr. Antonides' specific and detailed alternative? I'm looking for a biblically derived or driven plan that will have a similar outcome — the elimination or, at least a very significant reduction in the level of debt of the world's poorest countries.

Jake Kuiken
Calgary, AB

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Canadian Jubilee initiative has biblical roots

It is unfortunate that when Harry Antonides reads a report about a renewal of biblical vision in the jubilee movement, he is unable to believe it because of the evidence around him ("Can Jubilee Spark a Resurgence of Faith?" *CC*, July 24). John Hiemstra was not writing about the state of spirituality in Canada in general. He was writing about a very specific movement comprised of very specific people, who have over the last number of years undertaken a path of theological and biblical reflection around the theme of jubilee.

From the start of the Jubilee Initiative in Canada, the vision of Jubilee found in the Scriptures has been central. That is why the very first working group established was a Theology Working Group, in order to ensure that the initiative's work would be rooted in the biblical story.

Debt forgiveness, freedom from slavery, land renewal

As a result, readers of the initiative's literature will discover that while the worldwide jubilee movement has a single emphasis on debt relief, the Canadian Jubilee initiative has taken its cue from the biblical texts themselves and focused on debt forgiveness, freedom from slavery, and renewal of the land; three themes which are central in the sabbath and jubilee legislation.

Antonides states that the biblical revelation of God's holiness, human sinfulness, and atonement through Christ's suffering and death are ignored in this movement. On the contrary, those writing for the initiative have emphasized that the jubilee begins on the day of atonement, because God's call for renewal begins with an acknowledgment of our own sinfulness; that sabbath and jubilee call us fundamentally to image God, and such image-bearing has to do with becoming holy as God is holy; that the forgiveness promised in jubilee is necessary because the human heart at bottom is sinful and always inclines towards idolatry; and that the jubilee vision comes to its climax in the death and resurrection of Jesus, where Jesus ultimately frees us from slavery to sin and restores us to our rightful inheritance. All of these themes can be found in either the Vision Document of the Jubilee Initiative or in the publication *Making a New Beginning: Biblical Reflections on Jubilee*.

It is true that such themes are then discussed in political and economic contexts in various documents. This does not mean, however, that the movement thinks that the only solutions are political and economic. It only means that the initiative is engaging in the same kind of analysis that Paul did when he stated that "The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil" (1 Tim 6.10). Sure, Paul knew that alienation from God is the true root of evil. But that did not stop him from an economic analysis of the problem as well. Alienation from God can come to expression in political and economic injustice and distortion, as Paul, and indeed the scriptures as a whole, testify.

The Jubilee movement in Canada has intentionally adopted as one of its most foundational goals the renewal of the churches. Part of such a renewal is seen in a renewed attention to and engagement with Scripture. And since, as Mr Antonides acknowledges, it is such an unusual thing in our capitalist, consumer culture to see biblical renewal, when I see it I rejoice and acknowledge that surely God's Spirit must be at work.

Sylvia C. Keesmaat
Member of Theology Group
Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative, Toronto, Ont.

Arts/Media

Faith Today announces awards for Christian writing

MARKHAM, Ont. (EFC) — As usual, a high point of the God Uses Ink conference was the awards ceremony, spotlighting some of the best writing by Canadian Christians published in 1999.

Writers who entered the contest come from across the nation and across the spectrum of Christian denominations. More than 75 books and articles were entered, and each category was judged by a different set of independent judges.

The next deadline to enter the contest will be February 7, 2001, for works published in 2000. Guidelines and entry forms are available from *Faith Today*.

WINNERS, for work published in 1999:

- **Personal essay**: Harold Jantz of Winnipeg for "Welcoming yet not affirming" (Mennonite Brethren Herald). Honorable mention: Marcia Laycock of Edmonton for "Out of my comfort zone" (Virtue). Sonya Vanderveen Feddema of St. Catharines, Ont. for "Becoming a storytelling family" (Christian Home and School).

- **Short story**: Rob Alloway of Toronto for "The Marriage" from *Balaam's Revenge: and Other Uncommon Tales from the Old Testament* (Regent College Publishing).

- **Third-person article**: Denyse O'Leary of Toronto for "Big-picture science and faith find common ground" (Faith Today). Honourable mentions: Fred DeVries of Surrey, B.C. for "A Father's Heart" (Canadian Challenge). John Bowen of Toronto for "Signs of Welcome" (Good Idea!).

- **Non-fiction book, Christian living**: Danny Unrau of Richmond, B.C. for *Rogues, Rascals & Rare Gems* (Kindred Productions). Honourable mentions: James Taylor of Winfield, B.C. for *Precious Days & Practical Love: Caring For Your Aging Parent* (Northstone). Lorlie Barkman of Winnipeg for *Remember Dad? A Journey into Memory Loss* (Kindred Productions).

- **Non-fiction book, historical / biographical**: Gerald Bensen of Toronto (with Kenneth McMillan) for *To the Ends of the Earth: A History of the Canadian Bible Society* (Canadian Bible Society). Honourable mention: Helen Leschied of Abbotsford, B.C. for *Lead, Kindly Light* (Essence).

- **Non-fiction book, theological / cultural criticism**: Douglas Farrow of Montreal for *Ascension and Ecclesia* (Eerdmans). Honourable mentions: Mark Harris of Wolfville, N.S. for *Companions for Your Spiritual Journey* (InterVarsity Press) and Gordon Nickle of Calgary for *Peaceable Witness Among Muslims* (Herald Press).

- **Novel**: Connie Brummel Crook of Peterborough, Ont. for *Nellie's Victory* (Stoddart Publishing). Honourable mention: Linda Hall of Fredericton, N.B. for *Island of Refuge* (Multnomah).

The God Uses Ink awards program has encouraged Canadian Christian writers in the pursuit of excellence in the craft of print communication since the awards were founded in 1992 (for works published in 1991). The program promotes writing in six main categories: novel, non-fiction book, short story, article, personal essay, and a floating category that changes yearly. Where numbers warrant, a category may be subdivided.

Related websites

You can read the winning essay, "Welcoming yet not affirming" (about homosexuality), on the web at http://www.mbherald.com/38-21/welcoming.html You can also purchase *Balaam's Revenge* at http://www.Gospelcom.net/regent-bookstore/store/regent_publishing_details.php3/1573831417 and both *Rascals & Rare Gems* and *Remember Dad?* at http://www.mbconf.org/kindred.htm.

Faith Today is a national bi-monthly magazine that informs readers on thoughts, trends, issues and events affecting Canadian evangelicals. It has been published since 1983 by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, an association of 32 church denominations and more than 100 Christian academic, evangelistic, political and social development organizations. An estimated 2.5 million Canadians are evangelical.

For more information contact GUI Awards Contest, tel: (905) 479-5885, fax: (905) 479-4742; c/o *Faith Today, MIP Box 3745, Markham, ON, L3R 0Y4; e-mail: ft@efc-canada.com.*

Bible in cereal causes heartburn

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. (EP) — General Mills issued an apology July 21 for a promotion in which some 12 million CD-ROMS including a copy of the Bible will be distributed in cereal boxes. The CDs include a variety of games and reference tools.

The apology said, "While inclusion of the Bible may be seen as added value by some, it is the company's policy not to advance any particular set of religious beliefs. Inclusion of this material does not conform to our policy, and we apologize for this lapse."

The apology claimed that copies of the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible had been included on promotional CDs "without our knowledge or consent."

Gregory Swann, founder of Rhinosoft, which helped create the CDs, dismissed that claim. "That is a flat-out lie," he told the *Detroit Free Press*. "We all knew we were walking through a minefield. But I knew this idea was going to be very popular with millions of Christians who will want those free Bibles."

Rabbi James Rudin, inter-religious consultant for the American Jewish Committee in New York, said the promotion was offensive. "I eat General Mills products myself, and I don't think it's right for any American to pick up a box of cereal in the morning and feel excluded," Rudin told the *Free Press*. "This is one particular version of the Bible they're offering — and America is multi- religious, multi-ethnic. When Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Taoists and millions of other Americans pick up this box of cereal and look at this Bible, they are excluded."

The presence of an interactive Bible on the promotional CDs isn't advertised on the cereal boxes. After the software is started on the computer, users need to select "Home Reference" from a number of choices before discovering the Bible software. Other reference tools on the disks include a Merriam Webster dictionary and thesaurus and a one-volume encyclopedia.

A slap in the face

The apology from General Mills was a slap in the face to Zondervan Publishing Company, which administers the copyright for the NIV and waived usual licensing feeds for this promotion. "As a leading Bible publisher it's our mission to make Scriptures widely available to consumers, so we're certainly disappointed that there was confusion surrounding the inclusion of the Bible in the General Mills promotion," said Tom Mockabee, executive vice president and publisher of Bibles at Zondervan. "The NIV is the most-read and most-trusted Bible translation available, so there's added value to the consumer by having this in the cereal."

There are presently over 150 million copies of the NIV in print. More than a million copies of the Bible were available on computer disk before the General Mills promotion.

Despite the apology, it appears that the CD-ROMs are headed for grocery store shelves nationwide, in what will be one of the biggest Bible distributions in history.

Not all of the CDs in General Mills cereal boxes include the Bible. Disks containing the "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" computer game had the Bible removed at the request of Disney Interactive, the game's publisher. Disney, which has come under fire from Christians for homosexual advocacy, reportedly believed the Bible was too controversial and in March demanded that the Bible be excluded from disks featuring Disney products.

Book Review

Financial planner cashes in

The Pig and the Python:

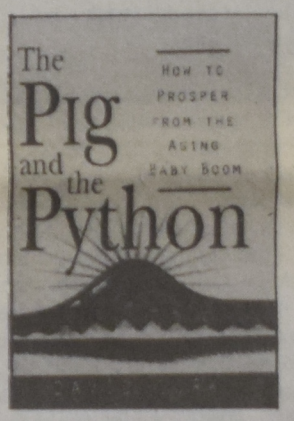
How to Prosper from the Aging Baby Boom

by David Cork with Susan Lightstone

Prima Publishing: 1998, Paperback, 240 pp.

ISBN: 0761512756

Reviewed by Dirk Schouten



In today's red-hot North American economy, many financial experts with above-average writing skills are cashing in on writing about the boom. In *The Pig and the Python*, David Cork, a Canadian financial planner, explains why he's convinced low interest rates and a climbing market are here to stay and what he thinks one can do to secure a prosperous future. *The Pig* sold a whopping 80,000 copies in Canada since 1996 and a sequel entitled *When the Pig Goes to Market* came out last year. Like David Chilton's best-selling *The Wealthy Barber*, the book is written in story form and is an easy read for anyone getting started in personal investing.

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Church

Female Chinese pastor serves church of 6,000 members

Alex Buchan

SHENYANG, China — Pastor He Hong leads the Beshi Street Church of Shenyang, an official Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) church. Youthful, she speaks passable English too, having studied at the Mennonite Seminary in Virginia from 1993-95. She's been the pastor since 1996.

I asked her what she thought of the American church.

"It was very pious, very conservative, but not growing much. They don't seem to connect with the culture. No one was listening, and the Christians didn't seem too distressed," she said. "Of course, they have so many churches. Here in Shenyang we have only six, and the courtyard on a Sunday is full of people, which attracts others. So there is an excitement, even a novelty about Christianity here that was not there in the U.S."

The Church

Pastor He's church has 6000 members and is also responsible for 23 meeting points, some of which are larger than her actual church. She's the chief pastor. There is also an elderly pastor who seems to be a bit senile, and two elders.

In addition, there are 20 volunteers to teach at the meeting points. That's not many leaders, when you consider they might have to pastor at least 60,000 Christians if you include the meeting points. In other words, you never get pastored in the Three Self.

The building holds only 1,000 people, so they have four services on a Sunday (which still leaves 2,000 unaccounted for). They baptize 500 people twice a year, and a candidate undergoes a year of catechism before taking the plunge.

During the week, there is a Monday night prayer meeting to which about 600 come. Then from Wednesday night to Friday night there are Bible studies in the church that are full each night. "Many more would like to come," Pastor He said. "but there are only six churches open in this city of six million where there are 200,000 believers." About 20 percent of the believers are under 30 years of age. There is no youth meeting because the church has no space for them.

The pastor's life

She's busy. She says, "All I have time to do is preach."

She has to prepare two sermons a week, an hour in length each time, though she may preach them up to three times each, and then recycle them some more if she goes out to the meeting points.

The flock

The people are very simple, she says, and many are illiterate. But it is easy to preach in China.

"People here feel instinctively it's better to have a faith than not to have one, so it works for Buddhism too," Pastor He said. "Also, unemployment, corruption — the problems of society — drive them to seek spiritual answers."

She stressed that "the faith of people is very pious, but they talk a lot about God as a judge, not as a loving Father. The stress is on holy living and being serious — people set themselves such high standards, and when they fail there is a lot of guilt."

She also said, "They believe too quickly. Sometimes we need to slow them down and make them consider what they have become a part of."

Evidence of dramatic church growth in China

Paul Davenport (with files from Alex Buchan)

HONG KONG (Compass) — Totals for the number of Christians in China leaked from two Chinese government bodies reveal far larger estimates of the number of Protestants than official church leaders have previously admitted.

At a Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB, the government body responsible for oversight of religions) conference, delegates were told the number of Protestants in China was 25 million. A leaked report from China's security organization, however, put the total at 35 million.

Official spokesmen, such as China Christian Council Chairman Dr. Han Wenzao, have long denied the possibility that there are more than 15 million Christians in China. *Three Self Patriotic Movement* (TSPM) statistics claim there are only 13.3 million Protestants. The TSPM is the official Protestant church organization in China.

"These leaks clearly show the Three Self leaders have been deliberately deceiving their Western audiences by pretending the total of Christians is far lower than their own government supervisory estimates, which they must have had access to," said a Hong Kong-based China watcher.

Many Western missions maintain the true number of Christians in China is likely to be 60 million and up. An *Open Doors* spokesman said they estimate there are 60 to 80 million Christians.

Chinese statistics notoriously unreliable

Statistics in China are notoriously unreliable. Published statistics often differ significantly from those compiled for the government's own use and kept classified. Numbers of Christians published in government handbooks and by the state-controlled TSPM give very conservative (and often out-of-date) figures that are the bare minimum. They usually include only those Christians registered and baptized in an official TSPM church or meeting point, and they omit unregistered house church believers and children under the age of 18.

Figures released privately by TSPM pastors for their local area or province are usually significantly higher. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the TSPM is still claiming publicly that the total number of Protestant Christians in China is only 13-15 million while the government itself may have internal statistics estimating 25-35 million.

Does this mean that all statistics emanating from China are totally unreliable? Not at all. There is plenty of evidence of church growth from both TSPM and house church sources reporting numbers attending local churches and those baptized in a particular locality each year. Careful collation of the available evidence down to the county level shows amazing church growth over the past two decades. The government's internal statistics of 25 million to 35 million Protestants have only to be compared to the 700,000 Protestants in 1949, when the Communists took over, for proof of the scale of the ongoing revival.

COURTESY VOICE OF THE MARTYRS

Imprisoned for more than 20 years, Chinese pastor Samuel Lamb (right) continues to preach in a growing "illegal" house church. "More persecution, more growing," he says.

China's mega-church focus

(Compass) — America is still the land of mega-churches, but China is fast catching up. China's official Protestant Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) contains huge congregations often squeezed into small, historic city-centre churches. Now a building frenzy is underway to build newer, bigger churches.

But some house church leaders complain that building mega-churches and herding everyone into large structures could end the growth. House church movements, however, don't present a total contrast to this TSPM trend. In some areas they have built large churches for themselves all quite unofficially, and authorities turn a blind eye. In Henan, many movements that have over 100,000 members call leaders and members together regularly to meet on hillsides and in caves for gatherings of 3,000 or more.

"From time to time, we need to be in a large gathering to feel the power of the gospel in China, to feel that we are not this small, struggling underground movement, but part of something huge and irresistible," said a house church leader in Xian.

Blue shirts to the rescue

FIJI (Religion Today) — The "blue shirts" are coming to the rescue in Fiji. They are Christians from across the island nation, which has suffered because of racial strife and a failed coup in which gunmen kidnapped the prime minister and his government, according to Outreach Magazine.

Christians from 12 denominations in Suva, the capital, are easily identifiable wearing blue shirts as they distribute food and clothing and share the gospel. Some victims have lost their jobs because of the conflict or are isolated because they are afraid to travel. "People see us arriving and shout, 'the blue shirts are coming,'" Josua Mateiwai, pastor of Suva Christian Outreach Center, told the magazine.

It is the first time in history that Fiji churches have worked together to promote reconciliation in the nation, Mateiwai said, according to Outreach. They are working closely with government social welfare departments, and some are giving up their incomes to support other church members who need help.

Many of those receiving aid are Fijians of Indian origin, most of whom are Muslim or Hindu. Desperate people have tears in their eyes when relief aid arrives, church leaders said. Churches placed a full-page ad in a Suva newspaper proclaiming their commitment to care for people of all races. "Christian charity between racial groups will come when the hearts of people have been changed by complete submission to Jesus Christ," the ad read.

Church

Serious hurdles remain for Catholic-Orthodox unity

VATICAN CITY (ZENIT.org). — Relations between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches are increasingly centred on Moscow, but their greatest obstacle comes from Oriental Rite Catholics in Eastern Europe. This was the conclusion of a meeting of representatives of the two confessions, which was held at Mount St. Mary's College in Ermitsburg, Maryland, from July 9-19.

Last year's meeting was postponed at the request of the Orthodox, in protest against NATO bombings of Serbia. This year's meeting brought together Catholic bishops and theologians from the United States, Italy, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia- Herzegovina, Germany, Greece, Israel, Lebanon, Poland, and Romania.

Intensified efforts

Since December 7, 1965, when Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople, lifted their mutual excommunications, Catholics and Orthodox, who have been separated since 1054, have intensified their efforts to overcome their division. However, this road has come upon an unexpected obstacle since the fall of the Berlin Wall. With the return of religious freedom in countries that gravitated around the former Soviet Union, the Patriarchate of Moscow refuses to continue the dialogue, accusing Rome of proselytism in its land, and protesting the rights recovered by Eastern Rite Catholics.

The main topic addressed at Baltimore was, precisely, the "Ecclesiological and Canonical Implications of Uniatism."

"Uniates," or Catholics of the Eastern Rite, at one time were Orthodox; however, several centuries ago they recognized the Pontiff's authority. By papal permission, they were allowed to continue celebrating the Orthodox liturgy. Thus, for centuries the Orthodox Church has regarded them as "infiltrated."

During the period of Communist religious persecution, Stalin endeavored to erase them from the map. Their churches were expropriated and given to the Orthodox Church, and their bishops, priests, and faithful suffered imprisonment and, in some cases, martyrdom. The persecution lasted until the 1980s, when Mikhail Gorbachev introduced "Perestroika."

After gaining independence from Russia, the Ukrainian authorities have tried to repair the injustice suffered by Catholics, by returning to them the churches Stalin gave the Orthodox. However, this decision has been very hard for the Orthodox to accept; they have been living in these parishes since Stalin's time, and some Orthodox priests, who are married and have a family, have now lost their parishes. The Moscow Patriarchate's reluctance to lose these churches, therefore, is not difficult to understand.

The official statement at the conclusion of the Baltimore meeting is somewhat pessimistic: "Although reactions were generalerally positive, the documents touching upon theological aspects and practical guidelines were met with some reserve and even outright opposition, sometimes from both sides. Therefore, it was felt necessary to continue the reflection by the Joint Commission in order to find common understanding on this extremely thorny question."

"Despite all the difficulties, the Commission hopes that through this process it will be able to develop further its quest for full communion between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches."

What did He look like?

Barry Baldwin

Reviewing an exhibition, *Seeing Salvation: Images of Christ*, in the London National Gallery, John Drury (*Times Literary Supplement*, March 24, 2000) observes "theologians may be above such a question, but for ordinary people it matters." In another essay (the *London Sunday Times*, April 3, 1994), art historian Waldemar Januszcak remarks, "there is no contemporary description of Christ. Nothing. We do not know if He was fat or thin, bearded or bald, handsome or ugly. And yet nine out of 10 of us would recognize Him immediately in the street. Art has given Him a face."

Did Christ resemble any film actors?

To put it another way, did Christ at all resemble (say) William Dafoe, Jeffrey Hunter, Enrique Irazoqui, Robert Powell, or Max von Sydow—five of the actors who have played him on the screen? Byzantine art and literature, even if they do not lead back to a guaranteed conclusion, provide a rich trail of clues as to how Christians from the fourth century on imagined Jesus.

Eusebius (*Church History* 7.18) mentions seeing colored portraits of Christ, Peter, and Paul at Caesarea. Although providing no details, he thus confirms what ordinary people believed, also an early stage in the history of Christian iconography, which was to cause great controversy for several centuries.

A little later, the fiery Bishop Epiphanius of Salamis expostulated: "They paint the Saviour with long hair, and this by conjecture because He is called a Nazarene and Nazarenes wear long hair. These impostors invent things according to their whims. They represent Peter as an old man with hair and beard cut short, Paul with receding hair or bald, and the other apostles as cropped short."

Fifth century ivories in the British Museum depict Christ as a stocky and clean-shaven Hercules; alternatively as a handsome Apollo. These were evidently designed to attract pagan patrons. Theodore Lector (*Church History* 1.15) says that painters were known discreetly to represent Christ as Zeus for just that reason, adding that pictures of Him with short curls were more veracious than ones with hair parted away from the forehead.

The 82nd Canon of the Quinisext Council of 692 commanded that Christ should be depicted in human form rather than symbolically as often hitherto. It is no coincidence that this is in the period of Justinian II, the first emperor to put Christ on his coinage, using the bearded Zeus look that evolved into the standard Byzantine image of Christ the Pantokrator.

Was His visage marred or angelic?

This was clearly an attempt to settle earlier disputes over His appearance. Because of Isaiah 52.14, "His visage was so marred more than any man," some early church fathers (Basil, Clement, Cyril) thought He was a short, plain man. Others preferred the Messiah of Psalm 44.3, "the most beautiful of the sons of men," for their more rapturous imaginings in which Christ is compared to the glorious face of Moses and the angelic looks of Stephen the Protomartyr.

A key text is the Letter to the Emperor Theophilus, written around 847 and attributed to John Damascene, reproduced in a ninth or tenth century manual for religious painters entitled *On Bodily Characteristics* by Ulpius the Roman. Besides Christ, this manual also contains notes on Adam, the prophets, Peter and Paul, and eleven church fathers. Ulpian and company were attempting to do for the great figures of Christianity what Byzantine chroniclers had done for Homeric heroes. There was a widespread mania for these identikit pictures.

Christ receives the fullest treatment, and the only one that claims explicitly to be derived from ancient sources. The Greek adjectives are either very rare or also applied to other individuals in the Christian gallery. Jesus' physical characteristics are: eyebrows that meet (likewise Peter and Paul); beautiful sharp eyes; prominent nose (also Paul, Basil, John Chrysostom, and Cyril); curly-haired (only Cyril of the others); stooping; fair (also Athanasius); black-bearded; wheat-coloured of visage, "taking after his mother" (Mary is so described in one other text); and long-fingered. This attribute is perhaps influenced by descriptions of Mary as large-handed; she is also round-faced in a multisyllabic Greek adjective likewise applied to the prophet Malachai.

Januszcak closed his essay thus: "In the crucified Christ, art found a likeness that was overtly human, yet fully divine. This, truly, was a godsend." This does the Byzantines less than full justice. To want to know what Jesus looked like was a natural and legitimate desire. The trouble was, their biggest problem was also the most attractive feature about Christ. He wasn't 50 feet tall or physically supernatural in any way. He was human.

Rabbi urges Jews to learn from Messianic Jews

(Religion Today) — A rabbi is urging his fellow Jews to learn from messianic Jews. Messianic Judaism is "infused with a deep sense of spirituality. It is vibrant, charismatic," said Dan Cohn-Sherbok, a Reform rabbi and professor of Judaism at the University of Wales. "It has something to offer traditional Jews." Instead of criticizing, "come and see what goes on and learn from it," Cohn-Sherbok said, according to *The Columbus* (Ohio) *Dispatch*.

"It's always better to listen to people than to spit on them," said Cohn-Sherbok. "The Jewish community does spit on the messianics. That's terrible, really." He spoke this week at a conference of the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations, meeting in Columbus. About 800 people attended.

Cohn-Sherbok spent eight years researching and writing the book *Messianic Judaism: The First Study of Messianic Judaism by a Non-Adherent*, which was published last month. Its purpose is to inform the Jewish community, he said. "It doesn't mean they will embrace them or like them. But they should at least know who the messianics are." Traditional Judaism holds that the Messiah has yet to come. Messianic Jews believe that Jesus, referred to by the Hebrew name Yeshua, is the promised Messiah.

Interim pastors for CRC

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Last year, Synod 1999 approved the hiring of up to six trained interim pastors for the Christian Reformed Church. This summer Pastor-Church Relations has completed the "team" with the calling of Rev. Melle Pool, who will be serving in Western Canada, and Rev. Allan Groen, who will be serving in Eastern Canada, according to the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

Rev. Pool is currently pastoring the Ebenezer CRC in Leduc, Alta. Rev. Groen will begin serving the First CRC in London, Ont.

For more details about the program of interim ministry, contact:

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Pastor-Church Relations
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Churches deplore Ontario super jails

Rick Prashaw

TORONTO, Ont. — The five super jails being built in Ontario are an affront to human dignity and a sure-fire recipe for less healthy communities and inferior corrections, says a church coalition with 25 years' criminal justice experience.

While some Ontario politicians and citizens cheer more punishment in these 'no-frills strict discipline institutions', "we deplore the lack of social analysis or discussion on the human and gospel values behind these ideas," said Michael Maher, president of The Church Council on Justice and Corrections, a national, ecumenical church coalition.

Super jails disconnect people

"High tech, automated super jails further disconnect people — the keeper from the kept, the family and support systems from the person incarcerated. They are an affront to the gospel because they are an affront to human dignity."

If we genuinely want safer communities, citizens need to know that these super jails will mean regional displacement from family and friends which will further alienate prisoners from their number one social support network. It will require increased expenses and time for families and volunteers to visit prisoners. Aboriginal offenders could be jailed a thousand kilometres or more away from their culture and communities.

The strong emphasis on technology and heightened security will decrease social and human contact on a day-to-day basis. The quality of legal representation risks diminishing as lawyers are offered audio and video teleconferencing rather than speaking with their clients in person. Super spartan prisons will further destroy social bonds.

'Make it tough' doesn't work

"Make it tough and they won't come back" doesn't work in a real world where influences of illiteracy, fetal alcohol syndrome and a host of other mental health, health and education deficiencies outweigh any 'get tough' messages. Yet many programs for these social problems have been cut by this government.

These jails are the further Americanization of Canadian corrections. Similar U.S. models have not delivered on safer communities and less re-offending. Prisons, especially prisons for profit handed over to the private sector, increase the dividends for crime control as industry.

Government ignores causes

So the government ignores the causes, builds bigger prisons, gives people jobs at them, and reaps the benefits of crime, and crime control! At a conference in Chicago two years ago, one former inmate explained that the southern cornfields of Illinois had been replaced by 13 new prisons. "They grow prisons now, not corn."

And out of all proportion to their numbers in population, the face of the prisoner is increasingly more often than not poor, any color but white, and anyone who goes against what a fearful majority decide, e.g. squeegee persons and panhandlers.

We need to ask tough questions about the "get tough" justice policy championed by this government and some media or social policy sectors. The average stay in jail of an Ontario male prisoner is 83 days and 63 days for females. Before people react to those statistics as proof of too lenient sentences, we need to reflect on the province's over-use of courts and jails for a wide range of property, alcohol and drug-related offences, breaches of probation, failure to pay fines, etc.

Addiction to jails

This addiction with jails is one primary reason for corrections cost. There are other, more promising restorative justice approaches to crime that pay attention to victim and offender needs and that promote both healing and accountability.

Promises by government spokespersons that centralized locations will enhance programming beg credibility with a government whose mantra has been cuts at all costs. The church coalition asks for the evidence from government that programming will improve in these super jails.

Rick Prashaw is Communications Co-ordinator of The Church Council on Justice and Corrections, a national, ecumenical church coalition.

Are self-help books helpful?

Getting Unstuck

Arlene Van Hove

We sold our sprawling family home of twenty four years for a scaled-down, newly renovated bungalow ideal for empty-nesters. The change is invigorating and exciting, but I cannot deny that the challenge of packing hundreds of books into a small ten-foot-by-ten-foot study is rather daunting. Still, I am not ready to toss any in a second hand book bin.

Books have always been a passion of mine. When I became a student my library increased as rapidly as our finances would allow. Since then the booming self-help market has challenged me to buy selectively. However, in my weaker moments I buy impulsively and rationalize the book will be helpful for future workshops or specific clients.

Expectations of self-help books

If the self-help book market reflects our society we can assume most of us are interested in living happy and effective lives. Yet a frequent critique is that "it doesn't work." Still we continue to buy and read. What could be the issue here?

There are several reasons self-help books do not live up to our expectations. First, most of us are looking for a quick fix to our problems. We soon learn reading about issues does not change anything. We need to be more actively involved.

Second, self-help books often begin with the changes we may want to make. However, this emphasis puts us ahead of ourselves. We first need to know where we are coming from, and this is best done in a caring environment. Once we can accept that part of us, we can decide what changes we need to make.

Third, reading a self-help book is usually done in isolation. How often do we discuss the contents in a receptive environment? Yet we learn most about ourselves through this kind of supportive dialogue. The objective and encouraging eye of another can be immensely useful in helping us find different ways of doing and being.

Learning new insights

The bottom line about the effectiveness of self-help books is not what the *book* can do for us but how can *we* make the best use of the insights the author is sharing with us.

For instance, I have the book *Beyond Blame: A New Way of Resolving Conflicts in Relationships* by Jeffrey A. Kottler on my desk. My first thought about the issue of "blame" reminds me it is the second sin committed in the Garden of Eden. Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the serpent. From that scenario we learn we all have a predisposition towards blaming others for whatever negative position we will find ourselves in. Blaming others lets us off the hook. It is easy.

Yet, according to Kottler, the key to resolving conflicts effectively is not focusing on what is wrong with others — rather the key lies within ourselves and our willingness to learn to react differently. A challenging idea that puts the responsibility for change on the only one we have control over — ourselves.

On the back cover of the book, a senior fellow from the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School promises the book will help us get at the root of the problem, take responsibility for what is happening and respond more effectively. A big agenda for a small softcover book. Still, the book seems worth reading and absorbing.

However, will the book live up to our expectations? That again will depend mostly on — ourselves. Can we work with Kottler's insights about blame? Does it fit within our Christian worldview? Can we drop our defensive behaviors and be open to change? Are we willing to do things differently?

Tools and stepping stones

Self-help books and columns such as these remind us of the intricacies of emotional and spiritual health. They keep us informed about new ways of seeing ourselves and the world around us. They can be one of a variety of useful tools we use to maintain emotional and spiritual health. Most of all, self-help material can stimulate our thinking and challenge us to feel, think and act more reflectively. These tools can in turn become stepping stones along the rugged path of life.

Arlene Van Hove is a psychotherapist with Cascade Christian Counselling Association in Surrey, B.C.

Haitian bishop accuses government of adopting "Cuban model"

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (ZENIT.org) — One of Haiti's nine Catholic bishops has accused the government of adopting the "Cuban model" to impose a totalitarian State in the country.

In early August, the European Union, the United States, and Canada, Haiti's principal sources of aid, threatened to withdraw their assistance if new elections were not called for 10 senatorial seats that, according to the bishops, were ceded illegally to the party of former President Jean Bertrand Aristide, "Familia Lavalas," which controls the Senate.

Bishop Guar Poulard, vice-president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference, said he was saddened "because the Haitian government refuses to be open to dialogue with important sectors, both national and international, that have criticized the elections.

"The present government of Haiti is attempting to adopt the Cuban totalitarian regime as a model," Poulard said in Jacmel, his episcopal see. That city is also an Aristide stronghold in the southwest of the country.

Prime Minister Jacques-Edouard Alexis reiterated his determination to go ahead despite the objections. "Haiti is a sovereign country," he said to mayors elected in the electoral process considered fraudulent. "We will go forward."

The results of the July 9 legislative elections have yet to be officially announced. However, everything seems to indicate that Aristide won control of the legislature, and that the majority of urban and rural councils are prepared to give him decisive influence in the coming years.

Wave of attacks mounting against Christians in India

NEW DELHI, India (BP) — Another day, another bombing. That's the impression being created, at least, by a mounting wave of attacks on Christians and churches in India.

Blasts from time bombs planted in churches have injured Christians in at least three states. Several Catholic priests have been murdered. Another was defended from a mob by his courageous landlord, a Hindu woman who fended off the attackers with boiling oil.

Indian church leaders charge that many of the attacks are part of a campaign by Hindu extremists bent on intimidating Indian Christians and driving missionaries out of India. Some government officials and Hindu groups counter that most cases are local quarrels exaggerated by Christians to foment hysteria — or are plots instigated by Pakistani Muslim agents to hurt India's international image.

But few deny the increasing frequency of anti-Christian incidents.

The trend commanded renewed world attention early last year when Australian Baptist missionary Graham Staines and his two young sons were burned to death in their vehicle by militant Hindus in Orissa state. Millions of average Hindus reacted with shock and expressed sympathy for the family.

Missionary Gladys Staines has expressed public forgiveness toward those who murdered her husband and sons, and she intends to stay in India. But captured suspect Dara Singh, the alleged leader of the deadly attack, has become a hero to some Hindu extremist groups.

Frightening growth pattern

Reported anti-Christian attacks have numbered in the dozens since the beginning of 2000, continuing a frightening growth pattern of recent years. On a single day (July 13), three front-page headlines in *The Hindu*, one of India's leading newspapers, dealt with aspects of the crisis:

"President's concern over cult of violence" — Indian President K.R. Narayanan called on state governors to act as moral leaders to defend India's heritage of tolerance against an "emerging cult of violence" against Christians and other minorities.

"Attack on nun in Gujarat" — After Catholic missionaries refused to stop relief food distribution, a Hindu mob reportedly assaulted a nun and looted the warehouse.

"'Brain behind' church blasts held" — Police in Bangalore arrested a Muslim activist, S.M. Ibrahim, allegedly "the brain" behind recent bombings of churches. Bangalore's police chief said the timing devices, explosives and detonators used in the bombings — and a van blast that killed two of Ibrahim's alleged accomplices July 9 — were similar. A computer disk found at Ibrahim's home contained a pamphlet reading: "Warning: Christian missionaries, stop conversions or quit India."

Indian police investigate

Police in Andhra Pradesh arrested four more members of several shadowy Muslim groups July 17. The suspects reportedly confessed to being involved in church bombings.

Bombing targets included the Gewett Memorial Baptist Church in Ongole, Andhra Pradesh, where three people were injured by a blast after a morning worship service. That attack and three others occurred June 9 — the very day Southern Baptists and other world Christians were participating in a day of prayer and fasting for the Hindus of India. But they marked the sixth in a series of recent attacks on churches in Andhra Pradesh alone.

Regardless of who's responsible for the church bombings, Christian leaders insist radical Hindu groups are behind many of the 100-plus attacks on Christians reported since the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power in India in 1998. The BJP government's consistent downplaying or denial of organized Hindu involvement, they charge, only encourages more attacks. International human rights groups express similar concerns, noting the government's ties to radical Hindu groups.

Yet another church bombing in early July in Karnataka drew 100,000 Christians to a July 9 rally to pray and call for action. "We appeal to the government to bring under control the organizations that openly challenge our constitutional rights, spread half-truths and untruths — and encourage criminals," said church leader Marampudi Joji at the rally.

Those organizations, according to Christians, include the Sangh Parivar ("united family"), a network of Hindu groups calling for the purification of India from non-Hindu influences — including Christianity.

Before his recent death in a car accident abroad, the Roman Catholic archbishop of New Delhi declared Christians were facing their worst crisis since India gained independence in 1947. "There is a definite strategy ... on a national basis," Archbishop Alan de Lastic said.

Modern India's "founding fathers" — Mohandas Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru — envisioned a pluralistic state, tolerant of all traditions. Two generations later, polls say a majority of Indians still favor that ideal, but radical forces preach "India for the Hindus," a land reserved for "one nation, one people, one culture." That's a volatile message in a nation that speaks countless dialects and is home to more than 100 million Muslims, 20 million Christians and throngs of Jains, Sikhs, Buddhists and tribals.

Muslims remain by far the biggest and most despised "enemy" for Hindu extremists. But Christians, at about two per cent of the population, present an easier target. And their evangelistic success — particularly among responsive low-caste Hindus, Dalits ("untouchables") and tribal peoples — infuriates the radicals, who contend Christians bribe poor Hindus to convert. Some Hindu groups carry out regular campaigns to "reconvert" new Christians by force.

Christian leaders say the radicals' real agenda is an old one: to defend the economic status quo of the Hindu caste system, which still relegates lower castes (the great majority of Indian Hindus) to servant status.

"The church in India was born in persecution, has grown in persecution and continues to suffer for the sake of the gospel," says one Indian evangelical. "The reason behind the persecution is that the gospel of Christ came on the one hand as a message of liberation to the poor and oppressed, and on the other hand as a threat to the Brahmins and caste Hindus."

Whatever the reason for the attacks, added another Christian worker, "even the founder of the nation, Nehru, warned the Indian people not to persecute Christians unless they wanted to spread Christianity. We need to pray that where there is persecution it will create a spiritual hunger for the truth."

Called to SERVE

Intangible Things
Heidi VanDerSlikke

I have to admit I wasn't exactly eager as I anticipated SERVE this summer. SERVE is a youth program aimed at young people ages 15-21. It provides an opportunity for teens to step out of their comfort zones and offer Christian service to people in need.

Typically youth groups travel at their own expense to areas fairly far from home, not because there are no needs locally, but because it gives them a chance to learn about other people and places. Being removed from the familiar environment also tends to heighten one's dependence on God. This summer there are 1850 kids registered to participate in SERVE projects in both Canada and the U.S.

Setting out for the wild frontier

I had heard so many good reports about SERVE, and it seemed important to my work as a youth leader that I go. But it wasn't easy to leave behind home-cooked food, quiet time and the comfort of my own bed, not to mention my family. Oddly enough, that was all the more reason for me to go. So, together with another adult leader and eight young people from our church, I piled into a borrowed van and set out for the wild frontier of Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Upon our arrival we were greeted by an enthusiastic host team whose members had spent months in prayer and preparation. As usual, most of my previous concerns were unwarranted. A professional chef was in charge of meals. Sleeping on the floor was just uncomfortable enough that I willingly got up an hour ahead of schedule every morning, providing lots of time for solitude and personal devotions. And although I certainly missed my husband and kids, I couldn't have felt lonely in the midst of such fellowship.

'How much further?'

Our Sunday afternoon activity was a three-hour hike up a mountain, which for me quickly became an allegory of the whole SERVE experience. Not long into the trek I was convinced I'd never make it. Then realizing I wasn't the only one having a hard time, I persevered, resisting the urge to ask. "How much further?" The pay-off was a spectacular view at the top, as well as a cool breeze. It took us an hour to come back down the mountain, in a steady rain. By the time we reached the bottom I felt like some fuzzy-headed wild animal. Nevertheless, I had the satisfied sense of having accomplished a difficult task, well worth the effort.

But the best part of SERVE was the people. Our group of 50 kids was divided into ten work teams. Throughout the week, we were sent to various work sites across Thunder Bay. We met spunky senior citizens, most of whom were clearly impressed by kids willing to work for free. One lady gave us an autographed copy of a book she had written. There was the supervisor at the Salvation Army men's hostel, who with his gravelly voice and scruffy beard warmly invited us to chapel.

150 people and stories

At the Shelter House, I watched with fascination as lunch was served to about 150 people of all ages and races. I wondered what their stories were: teenagers, seniors, little children and weary adults. I won't forget the weathered face of the grey-haired ex-biker who now busies himself witnessing to the street kids who come to the Drop In Centre he has established. I watched his wistful expression as he spoke of a stormy past and the acceptance of the fact that his life will likely end prematurely due to hepatitis C. I haven't the space to tell you about my fellow youth workers, the kids or our gregarious speaker, but I'd like to.

At the end of the week, our little group piled back into the van and travelled home in 20 hours straight. By the time we arrived, I had the "fuzzy-headed" feeling again, but it was still accompanied by an overwhelming sense of satisfaction, knowing for certain that God had called me to SERVE.

Heidi VanderSlikke lives and SERVES in Harriston, Ont.

Gender

Engendering thoughtfulness

Sherri B. Lantinga

God didn't make things easy for his image bearers. If he had only made people with one gender (as he apparently did with the angels), we wouldn't have many of the heated debates that we have today. But gender seems to be important to God; it's the only demographic characteristic that we know about Adam and Eve.

Unfortunately, as Syd Hielema pointed out in a recent sermon, "Satan takes difference and makes it into a problem." Where God intended glorifying diversity, we find problems surrounding our maleness and femaleness.

Students struggling with gender

I see a lot of my students at Dordt College struggling with the issue of gender. In their late teenage years, college students are moving from being children to being adults who make meaningful decisions. In this normal developmental process, they must grapple with understanding what being a man or a woman is all about.

Men and women alike are bombarded with conflicting messages from their family, the media, and others: Should males strive to be "manly men" who go hunting and drive powerful cars or trucks? Or should males be emotionally expressive and enjoy taking long walks?

"What, then, are Christians to think about proper gender roles? The average woman may be a little more nurturing than the average man, but who among us is average?"

Women wonder whether they should "be all they can be" and compete with men for meaningful careers; or should women strive to be pretty and efficient homemakers?

More difficult for Christians

Being a Christian seems to make the struggle to understand proper gender roles even harder. Many bright women could excel in graduate programs and make a real impact in the professional world but they also want to marry and have families. They believe that to be a faithful Christian woman they can only choose one path or the other, not both. Some well- meaning men are lousy at math but believe that because they are men that God calls them to be in charge of the family budget (despite the clear accounting talents of their wives).

Some students are surprised to learn that at this point in my life, I have chosen to work full-time while my husband finishes writing his dissertation and takes care of our boys. Students are full of questions about whether this was a faithful choice for us to make and whether men can be as nurturing as women. They are amazed that my husband is willing to "babysit" our children; some seem more bothered that my husband is a good stay-at-home dad than that I am a working mom. Our choices make my students stop to think about their own assumptions about gender differences.

DAN CALLIS

"I challenge students to consider a completely different notion of sexuality: sexuality is who we are, not what we do."

More alike than different

In my teaching about gender, I emphasize two important things about differences. First, men and women are more alike than different: we are very similar in terms of intelligence, the timing and sequencing of physical and language development, emotional experiences, motivations, and so on. This fact fits well with the creation account where the man declares the woman to be bone of his bones (Gen 2:23).

Second, the range of differences within each gender is much larger than any differences between the two genders. For example, the difference between the best and worst math scores among men is *much* larger than the difference between the average man's score and the average woman's score. Given the first point about similarity, we also know that there is significant overlap in the range of abilities of men and women. So, there are many women who outscore many men in math.

All given talents and gifts

This fact seems to fit with the biblical notion that we are all given various talents and gifts, regardless of gender — some will be teachers, some prophets, etc. Therefore, to talk about gender differences as though men and women were from different planets is misleading at best and unbiblical at worst.

What, then, are Christians to think about proper gender roles? The average woman may be a little more nurturing than the average man, but who among us is average? Is it not more glorifying to God to discern our given talents and to use them to the best of our abilities?

I would much rather see young people struggling to discern God's will in this way than have them rely on a deterministic attitude of "Well, my wife is a woman and therefore good with kids, so she can stay home and I'll find a job." Some women are truly gifted in this area and are great blessings to their families. Other women are lousy at being full-time stay-at-home moms and their talents (e.g., in research, in management) may be better used to serve the Kingdom elsewhere. We must be careful not to assume that women who work outside the home aren't full-time moms: I don't stop being a mom when I'm teaching class or grading papers in my office. We must also be careful not to assume that when a man changes diapers or takes his kids to the park, he is "babysitting" or "helping his wife"; he is being a father, and probably a pretty good one.

Struggling with sexuality

A second gender-related issue with which I see Christian students struggling is sexuality: they want clear reasons for sexual abstinence and they want to know where the line is between sexual and non-sexual acts. In a culture where we value pleasure and shun the delay of gratification, it seems very hard for even Christian students to justify "waiting until marriage." Students can recite the message of abstinence and the negative outcomes of promiscuity (STDs, AIDS, and pregnancy), but this approach to sexuality isn't working very well.

An informal survey of Dordt's Resident Assistants suggested that 15 to 20 per cent of unmarried Dordt students may be sexually active, and these numbers are probably very similar on other Christian campuses. Although every student on Dordt's campus probably believes at some level that sex before marriage is against God's will, sexual activity still happens.

Individualism vs. authority

One culprit is again the cultural value of individualism. The younger generations (perhaps especially those born after the great wars) do not understand obedience to authority merely because it is an authority. They are instead taught from an early age to think for themselves, to make their own decisions, to look for solid reasons from authority to *persuade* them to obedience.

Students are therefore left wanting to know *why* abstinence is required, and without clear arguments from God they feel oddly disconnected from the command to wait until marriage. Many students must think: "Sex feels great, God doesn't seem to have any clear reasons for wanting us to wait, everyone else is doing it, so why am I saying no?"

But I do not mean to paint an indifferent picture. Students agonize not only over the "Why wait?" question, but they also want to know "How far is *too* far?" in a relationship with the opposite sex. Our culture teaches us that sexuality is an act, and the hard part is then deciding "Which act did God have in mind when he said sex before marriage is wrong?"

I challenge students to consider a completely different notion of sexuality: sexuality is who we *are*, not what we *do*. For example, hugging a man is different from hugging a woman. God made men and women different in some important ways, and sexuality has a lot to do with that. In this way, gazing into a man's eyes or holding hands with a person of the other gender are sexual acts because we ourselves are sexual.

In cultures where arranged marriages are the norm, this idea of sexuality is implicitly recognized: the marrying couple might not even see each other before the marriage ceremony is complete.

We are the culture

So what are students (or ourselves or our children) to do? Can we escape our culture? A Reformed perspective of course would answer that we cannot and should not escape our culture, but seek to reform it. In my social psychology class the most important lesson I want students to learn is the very powerful impact they each have on other people.

We *are* the culture; how we act and speak greatly influences how others think and act. Rather than escape the culture we must recognize its influences and thoughtfully choose our own responses.

I recently overheard an engaged Canadian student say that she and her fiancee had agreed not to kiss until they were married. They had made a conscious decision about the limits of sexual expression. The listening student was shocked (I must admit my own surprise!), but I also sensed a respect for that decision and a sense of wonder that would hopefully generate some more thinking on this issue

We too must think more clearly about these issues, and share our thoughts with others. God has made a great diversity of creatures and we should not be loath to acknowledge a diversity of ideas. Your beliefs about gender roles may be different from mine, but we may both be making faithful decisions. Gender is a hard issue for Christians to consider in an age when radical feminism runs rampant and churches are dividing over gender-related issues. But we must continue our own struggle while we guide and support our young people in their search to become godly men and godly women.

Sherri Lantinga is an assistant professor of psychology at Dordt College; her training is in social psychology. She is married to Nick and has two young sons (4 ½ -year-old Samuel and 9- month-old David). In her spare time she enjoys gardening, camping, hiking, and opening doors for men.

Gender

Masculinity: in a mirror darkly

Harry der Nederlanden

Even the major magazines regularly feature articles on sexual identity and gender nowadays. Not too long ago it was a subject either for scholarly journals or for gossipy popular magazines oriented to personal relationships and self-image. No longer. Not just *Time*, *Newsweek* and *MacLeans*, but every church magazine on the continent regularly features articles on gender. Add to this the barrage of discussion, commentary and confessions that pours out of the T.V. set about sexuality and sexual roles day after day and you'd think that by now we'd all be experts on the subject.

HARRY DER NEDERLANDEN ILLUSTRATION

Amid a sexual identity crisis

No such thing. We're in the middle of a sexual identity crisis, or at least so we're told. Never before in history have so many been so confused about so basic a thing. The more we learn, it seems, the confuseder we get.

Actually, for a very long time I was so confused that I didn't even know that I was confused on the matter of gender. This is one area where you suffer from confusion particularly when you're clear-headed and straight. In fact, then you're not just confused; you're *guilty* of being confused.

"Every school kid knew that what you got at school had been processed by a vast bureaucracy whose only purpose was to keep kids 'innocent,' another word for ignorant."

The way we used to see it "in those days," if you were suffering from confusion, all you had to do was step in front of a mirror after taking a bath. Any confusion was instantly dispelled.

Now, that sounds as if I and other guys my age had it pretty easy in our youth. But getting naked in front of a mirror wasn't all that easy when I was a kid. For starters, we didn't have a bathroom, and there were no mirrors in the outhouse.

Percolating with initiative

There were knotholes, however. Some of them artificially created, usually by guys with pocket knives who were out to expand their education. We didn't have sex education, but "in those days" we had a lot of what the critics nowadays call "private initiative." You didn't wait for someone to pour information into you like coffee into a thermos. You were percolating with initiative. And with vague questions you really didn't want to ask.

We didn't even have running water in the house where I grew up. So we bought water from the Waterman, who came once a week with his tanker truck to fill our barrels and washtubs. At the outrageous price of 80 cents a barrel, we were carefully rationed one small basin of water for our weekly bath. When you stuck in your feet, the water barely reached your ankles. Retreating to the bedroom, you uncovered yourself a small section at a time, so you were never completely undressed, especially in the winter, because the bedrooms were not heated very well. In the process, you learned more about goosebumps than sexual identity.

Every town has its exhibitionists

I bathed that way in the summertime too because I was modest. Then, too, there was no lock on the bedroom door, and my sisters were always looking for ways to get revenge. For what precisely I can't remember.

Fortunately, every town has its exhibitionists. We were too unsophisticated to be leery of them, I guess. Or maybe we thought they'd been sent out by some Society for the Dissemination of Forbidden Knowledge devoted to improving the mind of kids out in the sticks. After all, there was the Chatauqua Society and the Search for Talent Show which travelled all over the countryside trying to make us hicks more sophisticated. With all the mosquitoes and the short summers and severe winters in northern Alberta, however, we were at a definite disadvantage.

What we did have going for us was the local waterhole, where the older (or better endowed) boys would swim in the skinny. Maybe "swim" is too grand a word, because you could wade across it both ways without getting water in your ears. Maybe "waterhole" is too grand a word too, because it was really a drainage pond dug by the C.N.R. Stacked ten feet high within dashing distance of the pond were thousands of railroad ties. We didn't have bathtub rings, we had creosote rings around our limbs and whatever else stuck up out of the water. We all figured on living a lot longer since we'd be well preserved.

Another Tarzan

Sometimes girls were spotted among the stacks of railroad ties or in the woods on the other side. Then big blond Brent would climb up on the nearest stack and flaunt himself in all his glorious, gleaming nakedness while beating his chest and uttering Tarzan's cry of the apes.

In brief scope, that's a lot of sex education, from modesty and peek-a-boo to robust nudity and exhibitionism. Nowadays sex education proponents like to talk as if those days were the dark ages when no one talked about sex. Nonsense. Past the age of nine, we talked about sex, our own and others, quite a lot. More than we talked about religion and politics. More even than football and hockey – at least, in the off season. To talk about it that much there had to have been some exchange of information.

Countering the adult conspiracy

Whatever information you got from your friends was, of course, treated with a lot more respect than what the teachers dished out at school. It was precious stuff, stolen from the adult world before they got a chance to package, sanitize and falsify it for our consumption. Every school kid knew that what you got at school had been processed by a vast bureaucracy whose only purpose was to keep kids "innocent," another word for ignorant. To counter that adult conspiracy we had a vast underground intelligence network.

Exchanges of information took place primarily in the woods in forts constructed with hundreds of interlaced branches torn from weedy poplars and maples. The best, however, were underground — deep holes covered with planks, dirt and sod, accessed by a narrow tunnel. Here and there, all across the continent, groups of teen and pre-teen boys sat scrunched shoulder to shoulder in dark, cramped forts. Everyone listened quietly, intently, gazing into the flame of the single candle burning in the middle while some daring under-aged Prometheus shared the latest bit of true enlightenment filched from the upper realms. Gary always passed around a badly mutilated cigarette borrowed from his father. The knowledge we so acquired carried with it the smell of the earth and of the woods as well as an aura of illicitness and mystery. Oh, yes, and of smoke. We saw, but as through a haze, darkly.

Laundered knowledge

Years later, our professors told us our view of the body and sexuality was derived from Plato. Little did he know that we had been raised on far more primeval information. There wasn't a single kid in the gang I grew up with who would have paid the slightest attention to a philosopher dressed in a bedsheet. We'd have recognized instinctively that he had some ulterior agenda — to rub our noses in our ignorance. We weren't really looking for that neatly stacked and laundered stuff that adults called knowledge; we were looking for mystery, for stories to tell and retell and occupy our fantasies.

Today all the experts seem to agree that, by and large, this education we acquired so assiduously crippled and perverted entire generations of my fellows. (Not me; just my fellows.) In numerous academies of higher, purer learning, people with several PhDs apiece are assembling new, more powerful technologies to purify and refashion us "boys" according to some new, improved model. They have access to all sorts of databases which prove beyond a shadow of any doubt that we men are a very badly designed product. Even by Detroit standards we'd all have been recalled years ago and gone the way of the Edsel.

And it all began when we stood in front of a mirror and discovered to our great relief that we belonged to a sex that was the opposite of the opposite sex.

Mirrors are magic

When you're a kid, you know mirrors are magic. In science class, your teachers told you about reflected light rays and lateral inversion and all that stuff, but you knew it was all a cover up. When you stand in front of a mirror, a multitude of eyes look back at you from the other side of the glass. Sometimes, like blond Brent, those

Continued on page 14...

Humor/Gender

Which left is right?

Karen DeBoer

I used to think I had no sense of direction. Then I met my husband. Each morning I send him off to work with a map to his office. He's worked at the same place for ten years. Of course, I'm not much better. Each week I drive 30 km to visit my friend. She lives 10 minutes away. On foot.

Recently one of our family members sent out printed invitations to a special event. We were flattered to receive a handwritten copy along with two detailed maps — one for driving to the party, the other with reversed directions for driving home. According to our invitation, the event was to begin at 3:00 p.m.; all the other invitations read 4:00 p.m. We thought the host family wanted us all to themselves until we realized they had provided an additional hour for us to get lost and still arrive on time.

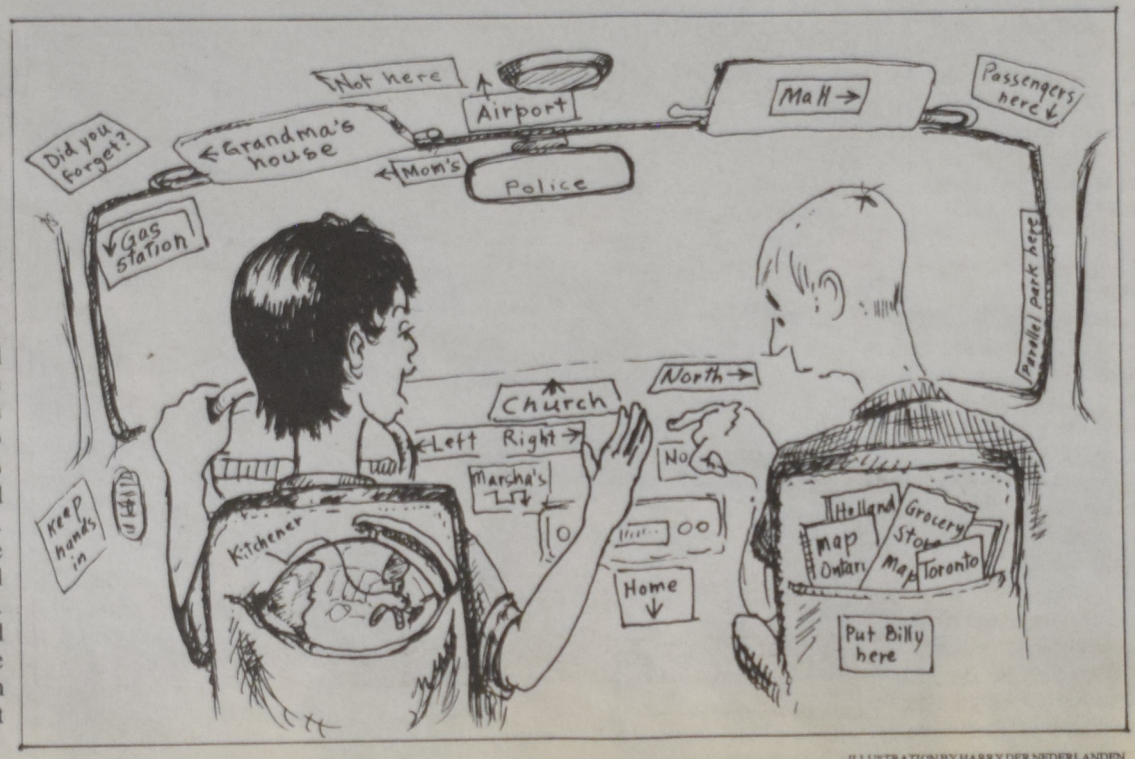

ILLUSTRATION BY HARRY DER NEDERLANDEN

Complete absence of mechanical inituition

Some might say a lack of navigation skills is the least of our worries. It's our complete absence of mechanical intuition that gets us into trouble. Like the time we pulled into a blinding rainstorm on Interstate 95 and realized our windshield wipers had quit. We were newlyweds, and I still cleaned windows. Apparently that was the inspiration for my husband's solution to the problem. "Open your window and move the wipers with your hand!" Ron shouted as we swerved to avoid an oncoming truck.

The next vehicle that passed us was treated to the sight of my six foot frame hanging out the passenger window and my arms flailing madly as I jerked the wipers from side to side. Ron smiled encouragingly as I glared back at him through the glass, gasped for air and shouted personal remarks. The rain never stopped. It was a fourteen hour trip.

'Prepare for the worst'

Since then, our driving motto has become "Prepare for the worst, it's sure to happen." That's why each winter Ron cleverly weighs down the back of our van with 50 lb bags of salt rocks. If we're out of salt and the road is slippery, we use my weight. The first time this happened I thought I needed to position myself exactly where the salt had been. I laid on the floor for 20 minutes before anyone noticed I was missing. Evidently sitting on the back seat is good enough.

Although we try to cover all the bases, the most meticulously planned trip can be thrown off course by an unplanned event. I thought ordering a triptik from our local auto club to get us to church and back each week would be a fool-proof plan to avoid getting lost — until we were invited somewhere for coffee and couldn't find our way back home.

Drastic measures

Of course drastic situations call for more drastic measures. Like having me drive. Once, while the van was sliding backwards down a snowy mountain, Ron jumped out and shouted, "You drive, I'll push from behind!" Leapfrogging over the backseats I flopped to the front of the vehicle, grabbed the wheel and lurched the van on ahead.

Thinking we'd reached the top of the mountain, I tried to pull over into a snow bank. Suddenly, the passenger door was yanked open to reveal a snow-covered figure running furiously beside the van and yelling, "Keep driving — huff puff — we're not there — huff — yet...." The voice trailed off as I did exactly what I'd been told. I kept driving. The last Ron saw of the van for the next hour was my blinking signal light as I turned off the mountain road and onto the adjoining highway. Eventually, I found a nice empty lot where I pulled over to wait.

Bored, I tidied up the van, wrote out a grocery list, and ate a roll of mints. It was when I was checking my lipstick in the rear view mirror that I caught a glimpse of a small bobbing object moving through the drifts. A closer look revealed Ron's head trying to keep above the snow as he swam towards the van.

'Was that necessary?'

"Was that necessary?" he asked through frozen lips just as I was rolling down the window to say, "Shake yourself off before you climb in, I just cleaned the van" and ask him what took so long. Apparently, jumping in and out of ditches to dodge snow plows and walking three miles in waist high snow drifts was a bit of a challenge.

Recently, a parking lot attendant commented on the prevalence of Post-it notes on my dashboard, visor and steering wheel. I explained each one contained careful directions to get me to the mall, through his parking garage and home again. He suggested I hang a Saint Christopher medallion from the rear view mirror. The patron saint of travelers, St. Christopher is also believed to provide protection from hailstorms and toothaches. We could arrive on time, without incident and smiling! Of course, being of Dutch descent and Christian Reformed, I politely declined. I spend enough money on my automobile without purchasing medallions. Besides, while my sense of direction when driving might be lacking, I always find my way home eventually.

What matters more is where I find my life direction. And on that Post-it note I've written these words from Isaiah 30:21, "Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you saying, 'This is the way, walk in it.'"

Karen DeBoer and her family believe they live somewhere in Kitchener.

Masculinity: in a mirror darkly

... continued from page 13

eyes saw you as Tarzan of the apes and you uttered deep guttural sounds and swelled your chest. The next moment those eyes were mocking you for your puny paleness, knocking all the wind out of your fragile chest.

Eyes staring back at you

Late Sunday night after hearing the stories by a missionary to Africa, you felt the eyes of people on you who lived in huts made of grass and mud, and you saw how strange, how utterly foreign and ridiculous you looked to someone else. That felt quite different from how you stood there the previous Friday night practising your quick draw after seeing the movie, "The Long Riders."

As you grew up, you tried on different ways of being a man, always aware of how you looked in those most mysterious mirrors – the eyes of others. Some of them were very ancient eyes. There was a time when I felt the eyes of kings and knights upon me waiting for me to prove myself, but none of the damsels I knew were ever in distress. In fact, they seemed to live in their own self-contained world, needing and asking nothing from us guys, and if we intruded uninvited, we were repulsed as from a high-walled castle. We crashed to the ground like sacks of mud and sticks.

Striking poses

This is how boys have grown into men (and, I venture, girls into women) over the ages. Beginning with a naked, vulnerable, somewhat embarrassing bodily self, each boy dressed himself up in some role and tried on a story for size, swaggering about, brandishing a weapon, striking poses, aware always that he's being seen. He's in a world with others who expect him to perform according to certain standards – all sorts of standards drawn from many times and different cultures.

All of that is far too messy and unpredictable for the experts. They know it confuses all those poor, bumbling males as they grope their way toward manhood. It's high time all those primitive, violent influences were eliminated and "we" agreed on one, single pattern that will merit the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval for masculinity.

I really look forward to that day, because I no longer get very much of a kick out of standing naked in front of a mirror. I get the distinct impression that all those eyes behind the glass have long since closed in dismay.

And once all those eyes have been displaced by the single, benign eye of the social scientist, we will no longer need the eyes of God either — eyes that judge, yes, but that judge in order to call to repentance and to renewal into the image of him who is the mirror of the Father.

What we need is a model of masculinity that will require no conversion, because we'll be so well behaved we won't need it.

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History

Faith between crate and Canada

The dollar and the Lord

George Vandervelde

"To tell you the truth, I came to Canada for the buck — but I think I served the Lord pretty well too." Authenticated by a heavy Dutch brogue, this frank admission, uttered in the middle of a conference about emigration, hit home.

The discussion had been circling around the question as to what led so many to emigrate from the Netherlands. Lofty motives filled the air, such as kingdom vision, a step of faith, and the desire to inject a robust strain of Calvinism into the new cultural setting. The candid reference to the buck brought the discussion up short. In the mixed bag of motives for emigrating, the possible dominance of economic considerations served as a reality check.

Unpacking the crates

Right around the 1950s, a huge number of Dutch people packed their belongings into large crates and set off for distant shores. A half-century later is a good time to look back. After all, the motivations for the big move are not simply buried in the past. They linger, shaping the following generations. In fact, the future of these groups as communities of faith hinges in part on the abiding legacy of the impulses for the big move.

Between and beyond all the things the emigrants took along, what went into those crates — and what came out? What corner of the crate did faith occupy? Or was the whole crate wrapped in faith?

'Has God Emigrated?'

My musings on these questions were prompted by an unusual invitation. In the context of "Simmer 2000," the millennial reunion of thousands of Frisian immigrants, a conference was held with the theme, "Has God Too Emigrated?" The theme was prompted by the perception, especially on the part of immigrants visiting the Netherlands, that the Dutch Calvinist heritage displays greater vitality in immigrant communities than in the country they left behind.

The organizers of this conference asked me to introduce this topic by reflecting on how God is experienced in these immigrant communities today. It was not without fear and trembling that I accepted the invitation. How does one come to grips with the state of faith among the communities of Dutch extraction? In this article I would like to explore the question — in the hope of benefiting from those with different and better insights.

This topic needs you

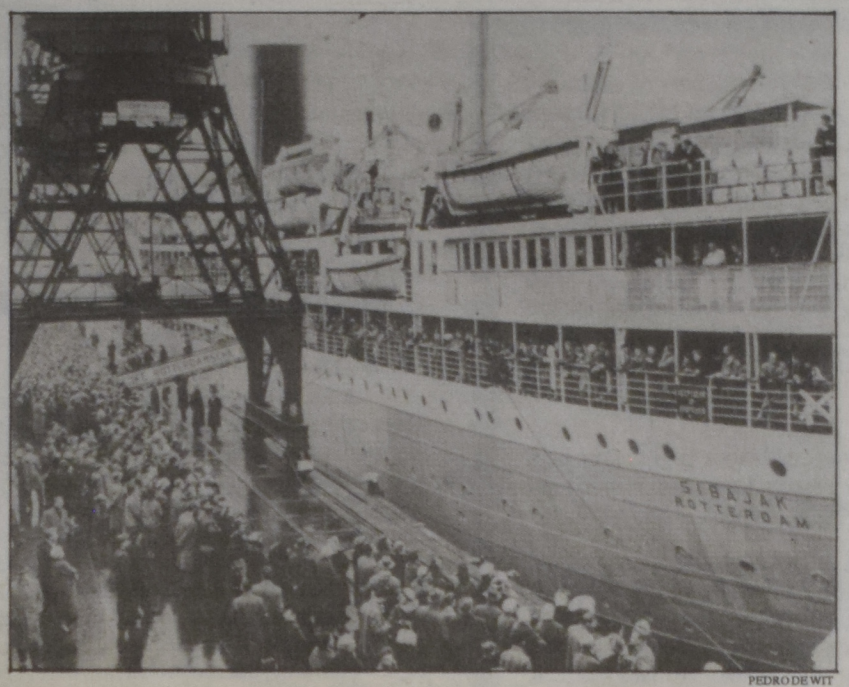
Before getting into the topic, a clarification and an invitation are in order. The clarification concerns the phrase "immigrant communities." I will use it as shorthand to refer to the communities that have their origin in Dutch immigration, even though these groups are in many ways no longer immigrant communities.

The invitation is prompted by the limitations of this piece. My reflections arise largely out of the Reformed communities with which I am most directly acquainted. It would be fascinating to read companion essays describing the experience of Dutch immigrants who joined various existing Canadian Protestant churches. It would be even more fascinating to hear the reflections of Dutch Christians whose biblical sense of church makes the very idea of "establishing" their "own" churches unthinkable. I have in mind, of course, our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters. I dare to write from my extremely limited perspective only because I have already benefited from the insight of others and because I count on readers' contributions that will elaborate, supplement, and quite likely correct my perceptions.

Motivations: a mixed bag

It seems clear to me that, in the decision to emigrate, factors other than faith and kingdom predominated. Our parents did not come here as the Pilgrim Fathers and Mothers, bent on establishing a "city set on a hill." The motivations for immigration were more complex and more mundane.

Fear was a large factor. World War II, with all its depravity and deprivation, was etched on the hearts of the Dutch. Coming on the heels of the Great War — "the war to end all wars" — a *Second* World War seemed to tear through Europe as a harbinger of permanent conflict. Many saw the rise of the Soviet Union and the descending "iron curtain" as setting the stage for the next brutal acts in a totalitarian play in which new mischief and terror would be unleashed on Europe. Emigration was in part the Dutch equivalent of "Never again!" Australia, Brazil, Canada spelled security.



PEDRO DE WIT

Dutch emigrants prepare to board the Sibajak in Rotterdam.

Another factor for many small business people was the encroaching post-war bureaucracy. My Dad, for example, owned a small meat market in Sappemeer, an unsung town in Groningen. During the war, the interim regime introduced the rationing of consumer goods. Most of the essentials of life could not be bought or sold without a coupon. For retailers this meant, of course, direct state control in the minutiae of their day-to-day operation, as well as a huge amount of tedious paper work. For them liberation from Nazi oppression also meant liberation from Nazi imposed bureaucracy. Deep was their disappointment, therefore, when they saw that wartime bureaucracy was replaced by post-war regulation of the economy. Australia, Canada, Brazil spelled freedom.

Bleak prospects

Then there's the buck. The War meant five years of deprivation. The years immediately after the war did not promise the economic flourishing that began in the sixties. Economic prospects looked bleak. A 1948 poll revealed that only a little over half of the Dutch population was content — or at least resigned — to stay in Holland, rather than to join the big exodus. Even though Mom and Dad may have been able to see their way clear through an extended period of economic hardship, when they looked at their children — all four, five, or eight of them — many had second thoughts. If one asked the immigrants what led them to take this step, the answer was often, "We did it for our children." Australia, Brazil, Canada spelled economic opportunity.

Serving the Lord too?

In considering reasons for emigrating, one word I have to this point not spelled is "faith" or "God." What about this? Faith was hardly absent. For many, emigration was a matter of deep and sincere prayer. Nor was faith separated from economic considerations. A story appearing in a recent Dutch book on the immigrants* is probably typical. A young couple with two children are living in with his widowed mother. Because the hopes of better economic times after the war have gone unfulfilled, the couple has been talking for some time about emigration, though they try to keep this painful prospect from their mother — he is her only child. At suppertime one evening, mom asks her son to read the bible. "Read the promise of God to Abraham, Jelte," she suggests. He looks up Genesis 17:8 and reads, "And I will give to you, and your offspring after you, the land where you are now an alien, all the land of Canada." The slip of the tongue having uncovered what she dreaded all along, the widow says, "It troubles you a great deal, doesn't it, boy" ("Het zit je erg hoog, he jongen!") Then, after having apparently pondered the passage the rest of the evening, the mother comes to this surprising conclusion: "My boy, it can't mean anything else; this must be God's will. Here in this town there's no future."

The huge step of emigrating was nothing less than a leap of faith. Despite all the information that the prospective emigrants gathered from acquaintances, field men, and government publications, the new country remained in large part *terra incognita*, an unknown land. Everything familiar slipped beneath the turbulent wake churned up by giant rotors propelling the immigrant ship ever farther from the familiar shores.

'Burying our children alive'

Especially those who emigrated soon after the war counted on the real possibility that they would never see their Mom and Dad again. Having their grown children and grandchildren torn from them by lure of some far off place, parents spoke of this parting as "burying our children alive." I remember my Grandfather deliberately mispronouncing the name of the land of our destiny, spitting it out as if it were a curse, the only curse he would ever take on his lips: "KaNAAda!" And indeed, the image of his agonizing wave froze in my mother's heart as the final farewell.

Most could deal with these painful aspects of emigrating only in the faith-conviction that, before the face of God, this was the right thing to do. But what was the role of faith? How did faith relate to the push of fear, regimentation, and hardship; and the pull of security, freedom, and economic opportunity? Was faith the dominant, directing motive? Or was faith the underpinning for a step driven by other motives? Or was the connection even looser? Did faith play second fiddle, relegated to the "also" category: "But I think I served the Lord pretty well too"? Did Australia, Brazil, and Canada spell faith — but rather feebly?

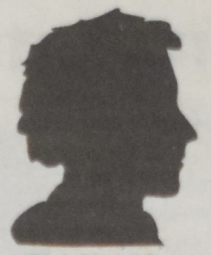
If faith in some ways took a back seat in packing the crate, what accounts for the relatively lively faith communities that arose long after the crates had served as fire-wood? We'll consider that in a subsequent article.

*Hylke Speerstra, *Het Wrede Paradijs*. Amsterdam: Contact, 2000

George Vandervelde teaches Systematic Theology at the Institute for Christian Studies.

Comment

Being offensive occasionally is not such a bad thing



Rick Van Manen

Two Under 35

Dirk Schouten

Dear Rick,

Welcome to the column. This is going to take some time for me to get used to, seeing as how we worked together in Korea for two years but now have contact only via e-mail.

Anyway, I think we'll make a good team. Why? Because we'll fight. We both have our own commitments, we're both stubborn, and we're both willing to take risks with what we say. Yet in the middle of all this difference is a similar world-and-life view. This should make for some stimulating dialogues. What do you think?

✉ ✉ ✉

Hey Dirk,

I am excited about this column. Although "fight" may be a rather strong word, I am definitely looking forward to blasting my way through your postmodern rhetoric. And so, "Cry havoc, and let slip the dogs of war."

Last Monday I went with some of my buddies to a young adult worship service in Toronto hosted by Campus Life at a Pentecostal church. I spent a lot of time in a Pentecostal church in Oshawa, so I knew what kinds of things to expect, and I wasn't disappointed. As usual, emotions ran high while intellectual stimulation was conspicuously absent.

Flying down the 401 after the service, my friends and I got into the almost inevitable discussion about what just happened at that service. Actually, it was mostly me drawing their attention to aspects of the service that were very troubling to me. For example, the singing and the praying that occurred at the service used only the pronouns I, me, and my.

There was no "we" or "us". I attributed this to the "Jesus and me" theology that has been permeating Western Christianity over the last few decades. And in the three hours that we were there, we didn't sing one song that I knew. No hymns were sung. It seems like these churches change all their songs every six months. How can anyone keep up?

The sermon, and I use the term loosely, was really a motivational speech that would have fit in just as well at a company policy meeting. It was one idea stated over and over again in between dramatic emotional outbursts and gibberish that no one understood or interpreted, which is referred to in these circles as speaking in tongues.

The Word of God was read only twice in three hours. One of the worship leaders insisted that the source of all our problems is that we don't read the Bible enough. Then she attempted to support her point by using the story of the paralytic in Mark 2. Ironically, she had no idea where in the Bible that story was found, nor even if the story was about a paralytic or a blind man. About the only thing she got right was that Jesus has the power to forgive sins.

I could go on. But right now I am certain that there are some people reading this column who are saying to themselves, "O great, here we go again. Another one of these harsh, critical, intolerant, people who have no respect for any other view but their own."

I have to admit that they would be right. What I wrote is harsh and it is critical, and I suppose it borders on intolerance.

But so what? What's wrong with a little intolerance? What's wrong with a little criticism? Today we live in an individualistic culture that says everyone has a right to their own opinion. Everyone has a right to their own viewpoint. Everyone has a right to worship in their own style and their own way. Thou shalt not judge! Thou shalt not offend! I was talking to my best friend, David, about this. We agreed that being offensive occasionally is not such a bad thing. The Apostle Paul tells us to speak the truth in love. So often we focus on the "love" of this command. But equally important is the command to speak! Even if speaking out threatens the very fabric of our very accepting culture. What do you think?

✉ ✉ ✉

Rick,

A lot has been said and written about this style of worship and expression of faith. If I'm not mistaken it's becoming more of an issue in our own circles. I've heard that at Dordt College many students skip church and head for the campus chapel, where they set up services comparable to the one you describe — to the chagrin of faculty members.

No, I don't appreciate this style of worship. But I've put aside my dislike and am now asking questions about the sociology of it all. Is this part of a pattern and, if so, can we expect changes? At Dordt, professors are convinced that the popularity of praise-and-worship is the result of the "Let's be tolerant of all" mind-set which accompanied the post-Reagan/Bush era. And what about demographics? If Canadians can arrange their financial futures based on the activities of the baby boomers, can't they also notice and respond to trends in "religious" behavior?

I think so, but the problem is that very few of us know how to start this type of analysis. I can do only what many in our circles do — worry about Christian education and whether or not reformational thought is becoming a dinosaur. Right now I have no idea how to gauge what will happen next. But, who knows, maybe there are some clever people out there who do.

Do you ever think about the future, Rick? Do you ever wonder what kind of kids you'll be teaching in theology class some day?

✉ ✉ ✉

Dirk,

It is exactly this "let's be tolerant of all" mentality that I am questioning. What does it mean to be tolerant? For a lot of people, tolerance means "if you don't have anything good to say, don't say anything at all." Our very "tolerant" culture is backing us into a corner where we have become afraid to express our opinions (both positive and negative) because of the very "intolerant" response we will receive. I do think you're right about the sociology of it all. What is it about this kind of worship style that is so appealing? What is it about our own worship style that drives some people away? And can we simply attribute it to differences in style or are there deeper theological and philosophical assumptions that have to be addressed?

I guess I am one of those who sees the last question as essential in answering the first two. You are certainly right in saying that things are changing. And although I applaud change when it happens, I hope that we have the discernment to step back and look at what we are giving up and why.

As for the kind of kids in my future theology classes, I have to admit that until you mentioned it I had not thought about them very much at all. I read Bert Witvoet's summary of the pastor's survey in the *Banner* a couple of weeks ago and was quite disturbed to find out that about 33 per cent of the pastors surveyed were having reservations about the Canons of Dort. If this is any indication of the kind of students who will be studying theology over the next few years, I am understandably concerned. However, Refomational thinking going the way of the dinosaur may be a bit extreme at this point.

✉ ✉ ✉

Rick,

What's always nagged me about "tolerance" is its built-in contradiction. In fact, this philosophy is at its root very intolerant. I vividly remember hearing a university student say to her peers, "Listen folks, it's wrong for any of you to tell others that they're wrong."

We've run out of room for this month, Rick, but we'll get into it a month from now, at which time you can start things off.

Later,
Dirk

Dirk Schouten taught literature and writing at Kosin University in South Korea. This month, Christian Courier welcomes Rick Van Manen as co-writer for Two Under 35. Rick has been teaching for two years in South Korea.

News Comment

Nose for News

Bert Hielema

"WIR LEBEN NUR EINS." I imagine that went through the mind of most of the German passengers before they boarded that fateful Concorde flight a few weeks ago. Usually the 100 seats of these supersonic machines are filled with rich businessmen and women, overpaid entertainers, sport figures and high government officials who think that, to save the world, every hour is worth $3000 or so. That is the usual charge for the three hour trip from Paris-London to New York or Washington.

Each Concorde has 100 tons of fuel on board, or a thousand litres of high octane stuff per person, which amounts to about $400 per seat, but since the average passenger load factor is only 70 per cent, the real cost is $570 for fuel alone.

"Wir leben nur eins," certainly was the motto for these German 'common folk' most of whom had scrimped and saved to afford this holiday of a lifetime, so under the motto "We only live once" they had justified flying like the rich and famous before starting a 10-day cruise on the 'Deutschland,' a five star cruise ship, for a total cost of $16,000 US ($24,000 Can) per person.

The Concorde, from an environmental point of view is an ecological disaster: it cruises at 55,000 feet — some 17 km up in the sky — where the air is thinner and where the exhaust from its super-thirsty engines does maximum damage to the ozone layer. But then, the mentality of our generation is by and large that "we only live once," so why not whoop it up.

JUST STAYING WITH EUROPE: a couple of notes from Amsterdam and the Evangelism convention called Amsterdam 2000, organized by the Billy Graham organization. Old Billy himself (Himself?) was supposed to speak, via satellite, but just before he was to go on the air, the participants were told that due to a bad night's sleep he did not have the energy and strength to do so. He informed the organizers that he really appreciated that his son, Franklin Graham Junior, was able to take his place. *Trouw*,the Dutch National Christian Daily, commented: "His son, a spitting image of his father, who instead of being addicted to the whisky is now addicted to the Lord, could not really find his rhythm..." Said the article: "Graham Junior must be pious and competent, but he has the charisma of a bookkeeper from Vladivostok, a handicap if his aim is, as he said, 'to win back the lost for the Gospel'."

"Nevertheless," so continued *Trouw*, "this is a fascinating convention, because hardly ever have so many people, 9,000, from so many countries — a total of 190 — and so many cultures been together for nine days to learn from each other and pray to the same God. To avoid a Babel-like confusion, a total of 25 different interpreters are present. One of the topics to be discussed was: 'The great question mark of the 21st Century is how to reach a generation which listens with its eyes and thinks with its feelings'" — a problem which also confronts the publishers of a humble publication such as the *Christian Courier*.

AMSTERDAM ALSO made the news in the *New York Times*. It published a report written by the Amsterdam Police Department, under the heading The Joy of the Red-Light District: A Police Guide. Willem Schild, the Amsterdam policeman who wrote the guide, outlines 10 rules. Rule number 1 is: Have FUN, but act in a NORMAL manner. Rule number 6: PROSTITUTION. No pictures of women. Rule number 10: Parking is NOT FREE.

Writes the *N.Y. Times*: "Although the guide does contain a map, it doesn't say which 'coffee shops' sell the best marijuana or which sex shows are the liveliest or which bordellos have the prettiest women. Most tourists guides to the Netherlands devote pages to the Vermeers and Rembrandts in the Rijksmuseum, but offer few sentences on the red-light district. Yet the most common inquiry at the Amsterdam Tourist Service on the Damrak by the five million visitors Amsterdam gets each year. is not 'where can I see the 'Nachtwacht'. but 'Where is the red-light district?' according to an attendant there. Says she: 'They blush, we tell them, then they walk away fast. They're shy. They don't want to admit they want to see the women in the windows.'"

The police booklet advises tourists that the women charge $25-$50 for 20 minutes, paid in advance, and tells them: "Make a clear deal at the door and don't be too drunk to get things done. Time is money for these ladies."

THE MARIJUANA reference reminds me of the drug problem in North America. Its use is condoned in Amsterdam in the so-called 'coffee shops,' and, consequently the work load of the police is reduced dramatically. Comments the Amsterdam Superintendent of Police, Klaas Wiltings: "In the Netherlands we talk about problems. We don't hide them." That is the reason why I, being from the Netherlands, also introduce problems and write about them, rather than pretend that they don't exist.

The laws against marijuana are like the US Prohibition Period from 1920 till 1933, when the sale and possession of alcohol was forbidden, resulting in a monstrous, artificially created crime wave. A recent judgment in Ontario recommends the weed for medical purposes. It is generally believed that smoking pot is, by and large, not much more dangerous than smoking tobacco, yet the one is legal and a rich tax source, and the other drains the budget considerably.

ANOTHER DANGER to our long-term health is our political system, no matter whether we have a Democrat, Republican or Liberal regime. When the Republican Convention opened in Philadelphia, I tuned in but soon tuned out again. These people spent close to $100 million Cdn. ($60 million US) to stage this event, and that in a city with one of the highest poverty rates in the nation.

Why, I wonder, did I find looking at this large gathering of well-to-do people so repugnant? I would have perfectly fitted in with 90 per cent of these delegates: white, older, well-to-do and Christian. Yet watching it made me irritable, because it looked like a gigantic con-game: the bland presentations, the total incoherence of their candidate, who, while discussing education policy in Kentucky, said, with a straight face: "If you don't know what you are supposed to know, we'll make sure you do early before it's too late."

I AM SURE THAT an unedited, spontaneous dialogue between George W. Bush and Jean Chretien could be aired on the *This Hour has 22 Minutes* and be the hit of the year. By now we know that in politics it is not what is said that is important, but how matters are presented that counts: with a straight face, and sounding utterly sincere.

My advice: Always vote for the candidate who promises the least. He or she will also break the fewest promises. Will Al Gore be any different? His crowning will take place in Los Angeles. The present political system is soaked with money, but its priorities are so distorted that the gap between rich and poor is increasing rapidly.

Fewer and fewer mega-corporations control what we are allowed to see, read, hear and understand as the news, while international trade agreements can nullify our environmental laws for the benefit of the rich. Can you blame me for being so down on politics when I read that the corporate money avalanche into the Republican coffers comes from: the tobacco industry, who are on a high because that party refuses to attack their product; from the road builders, whose money is paving the way for Bush because he opposes a reduction in the gas tax; from the wealthy, who will be out of the woods with Bush because he will cut their taxes; from the oil and and gas industry, which knows that Republicans — and particularly the powerful Christian Right wing — oppose environmental regulation. Jerry Falwell's call to his followers: "Our crowd needs to get into battle, keep their mouths shut and help this man (George W. Bush) win."

THE ENVIRONMENT IS always on my mind because I live in the country. With my weather station at home I can monitor closely what goes on in God's creation. Early August saw a month's rainfall in one day, while elsewhere the world suffers from severe droughts. This is one of the worst years on record for forest fires in the U.S. China especially is in a dangerous spot. About one-half billion of its people are running out of water. Four hundred of China's 668 cities have now declared water shortages, meaning the tap may function only a few hours a day or not at all. Rivers and lakes are drying up.

Each day I watch the BBC World News at 5 p.m., which also gives the world weather. Russia, east of Moscow, has been hot all summer. So has the Canadian Arctic. A recent satellite-based survey suggests that pollution can cut rainfall. Both China and Russia are among the most polluted countries in the world. Something to think about— that is if we still think.

I wonder when Christianity will wake up to the fact that creating pollution is a sin, a sin against God's honor and majesty. There is more and more evidence that God fashioned creation in such a way that it has a built-in revenge system: the creational trespasses of the perpetrators will be visited upon the generations to come. This does not bode well for our children and grandchildren, as our continent is the greatest source of pollution.

Bert Hielema is busy writing a series on "Church Reform: A Different Perspective." He writes and thinks and gets his hands dirty in Tweed, Ont.

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Environment

Evolution battle shifts to Kansas ballot box

Art Toalston

TOPEKA, Kan. (BP) — Three members of the Kansas State Board of Education who voted to lessen evolution's grip on the state's public schools were opposed in an August election and two were defeated.

The election process became a way for evolution devotees to challenge the Kansas State Board of Education's decision to eliminate references to the theology of evolution on state assessment tests measuring student competency in science — a decision that ignited a national controversy.

Heightened evolution-vs-creation debate

The Kansas ballot box battle drew the attention of *USA Today*, which prominently carried four stories about the nation's heightened evolution-vs-creation debate.

"A coalition of organizations supporting evolution went all out last week, sponsoring a statewide array of events ...," *USA Today* reported, citing, for example, a reenactment of the Scopes trial sponsored by the anti-conservative People for the American Way in Washington and featuring noted actor Ed Asner, a Kansas native.

Full-throttle campaign

A key target of evolution supporters was Linda Holloway, who was board chairman at the time of its vote. Holloway responded to the challenge with a full-throttle campaign, including TV ads costing $20,000.

"I believe we should teach evolution in school," she starts in one of two ads, "but I also believe that decision should be left to you. I trust you and your local school board to make decisions that are best for your child. If you want evolution or other theories taught, that should be your choice — not some federal or state mandate."

"We're not saying throw out the experts," Holloway said, but crux education decisions should be made by "the people closer to the children [as compared to] the people at the state and federal level."

Holloway lost her seat to a candidate who was endorsed by the *Kansas City Star*, which declared, "It is time to get the state school board back on track. Social conservatives chosen in previous elections have been busy injecting their own religious values into policy-making for the public schools."

"The board's decision does not prevent local school boards from teaching evolution," the *Star* acknowledged. "However, it sends the message that evolution is not an important part of student education in the sciences."

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Watching the beach and saving the prairie

Creation waits...

John Wood

Over half the crowd filling the Fire Hall on south Whidbey Island are grey heads. The retirement community is out in full force. Clearly something important is up on this warm Thursday night in July. I was attending the monthly meeting of the wildly successful Beach Watchers. Over the last decade they have volunteered over 25,000 hours in beach monitoring, research, guiding school field trips and promoting the stewardship in this part of Puget Sound. But tonight they were listening to an altogether different presentation on forest trees and upland prairies. I wondered too what prairies and beaches might have to do with each other?

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The shoreline of one of the San Juan Islands.

Whidbey Island is situated just south of Vancouver Island and together with the San Juan and Gulf Islands they make up a unique eco-zone in North America. Here in the heart of the Pacific Northwest, within miles of the wettest spot on the continent lies a low rainfall zone of ten to forty inches a year. These open landscapes were attractive to Europeans looking for land suitable for farming. They remain so today for recreation, retirement and permanent homes.

But all is not well here and this attractive landscape is being loved to death, overrun by the sheer intensity of human numbers. For instance, and remarkably so here on the rainy West Coast, groundwater for drinking is an ongoing problem. Intensive development and well-drilling have lowered the water table in some places, with seawater pushing in from the surrounding Puget Sound. So islanders are aware that unrestricted growth threatens their long-term future.

The threatened prairie

Smith Prairie, east of Coupeville, is a rare example of prairie in the Puget Sound basin. It is situated on a glacial out-wash plain that rapidly dries out after a rain. Most of the area was in the Whidbey Island Game Farm owned by the State of Washington. In addition, its location within Ebey's Landing National Historic Reserve offered other tools for land use protection. So most people assumed it was safe from development pressures. But all that changed in 1999 when a Game Department budget shortage prompted layoffs. The 175-acre pheasant farm was declared surplus and plans were drawn up to sub-divide it into 10-acre housing lots. It looked like a key piece of the area's natural history would be lost to development.

Timing is everything

Now an unlikely group of Christian environmentalists entered the picture. Five years ago the Au Sable Institute, a Michigan-based Christian environmental group, began summer sessions on Whidbey Island. They called it the "Pacific Rim Campus", but it was a campus without walls. The courses were operating out of rented facilities.

Au Sable Director Cal DeWitt had dreamed that they might be able to purchase property on the island. Now he set about to make that dream come true. It meant both raising seed money and changing legislation to see that the land was not lost to private interests, but held in the public trust. In a whirl of cooperation and creativity, Au Sable has gone from zero to 175 acres in one year. Local politicians led the charge to revise the State legislation, securing the land for non-profit organizations only. The Institute was able to secure $500,000 toward purchase and remodeling the facilities and now needs another $4 million to complete the project.

The savior of the prairie

The crowd in the Fire Hall was there to hear Cal describe his vision of stewardship. For many that night it was a trip back to dim childhood memories of once familiar scripture stories. This environmental crowd had clearly never heard the Bible discussed this way! In one short year the Christians in the Au Sable Institute have gone from nearly invisible in the local community to local heroes. It isn't unusual to hear someone call Au Sable the "savior of the prairie." It is a fitting remark, and in keeping with the Institute's mission "to bring healing to the biosphere and the whole of Creation." They do this by "developing practical tools for environmental stewardship in programs that take seriously both science and theology." May their tribe increase!

John R. Wood teaches environmental science at The King's University College, Edmonton.

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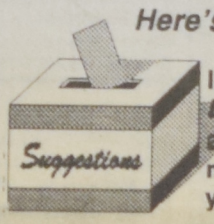

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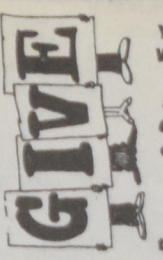

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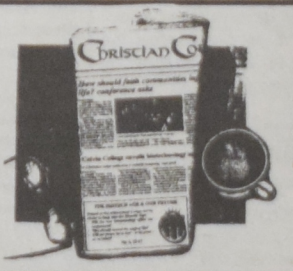

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JACOB and JANSJE FEENSTRA
(nee DE WIT)
Wedding text: "The human mind plans the way but the Lord directs the steps." (Proverbs 16:9)
We are thankful for all God's blessings on the 50 years of married life of our parents and grandparents. May God bless them in the years to come.
Peter Feenstra
Neil Feenstra
Patricia & John Rood
Gerrie, Linda, Robbie, Lisa
Marie & James Schneider
Darrel, Nico, Anna Marie
Open House on Saturday, Sept. 2, 2000, from 2-4 p.m. at John & Pat Rood's farm, 815651 Oxford Rd. 22, RR 2, Innerkip, Ont.
Home address: 77 Bay St., Woodstock, ON N4S 3K7

Vlaardingen, the Neth. Stratford, Ont.
1950 August 31 2000
"I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart — for the glory of the LORD is great." (Ps.138:1a,5b)
Together with our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, we
MARTIN and ADA GELEYNSE
(nee POUWELS)
hope to celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary. You are invited to come and share our joy at an Open House reception in the Griffith Auditorium, Woodland Towers at 639 West Gore Street, Stratford, Ont. on Saturday, September 2, 2000, from 2-4 p.m. The Lord willing this is to be followed by the 50th anniversary of ordination on September 10, 2000, in the Christian Reformed Church of Stratford, 200 Ontario St., at 10 a.m.
"Praise and thanksgiving to you I will bring." (PsH 631)

Jarvis, Ont. Grimsby, Ont.
1965 August 28 2000
It is with gratefulness and thanks to God that we can celebrate 35 years of marriage of our parents and Pake and Beppe,
LIEUWE and JANE REGNERUS
(nee WESTERHUIS)
Our hope and prayer is that God will bless them in the celebration of their wedding anniversary and with many more years together.
With love and best wishes:
Lloyd
Marlene
Roger & Elma
Marita, Amanda, Quinten
Andrew & Melinda
Cassandra, Andrew James
(Fryslan boppe).

1950 August 30 2000
"I am the vine; you are the branches... ...apart from Me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)
With hearts full of thanksgiving to our Heavenly Father, we hope to celebrate the 50th anniversary of
RALPH and HILLIE KUIPERS
Congratulations and best wishes from:
John & Jean Kuipers — Waterford, Ont.
Nicki & Steve Straza (Haley, Austin), Fred & Val Kuipers (Chelsea, Seth)
Jerry & Dottie Kuipers — Waterloo, Ont.
Herma & Hans VanHeighten — Port Dover, Ont.
Stephanie, Jennifer, Tracie
Henrietta & Dan Irwin — Simcoe, Ont.
Jason, Jeremy, Christine (Alexander), Laura, Alyssa
Ed & Sandra Kuipers — Simcoe, Ont.
Joshua, Jordon
Ev & Ron Brandon — Simcoe, Ont.
Jason
To celebrate this happy occasion, an Open House will be held D.V. on Saturday, September 2, 2000, from 1:30-3:30 p.m. at Parkview Meadows Retirement Village, 72 Town Centre Dr., Townsend, Ont.
Best wishes only please.
Home address: 12 Oakwood Ave., Simcoe, ON N3Y 1H3

Toronto Brampton
1960 August 13 2000
With thankfulness to God, the family of
JOHN and NELLY ROELOFSEN
(nee VANDERMEY)
announces their 40th wedding anniversary.
Jeanette & Charles
Patricia & Jim
Theresa & Tom
Home address: 8 Lisa St., #907, Brampton, ON L6T 4S6

Obituaries

On July 21, 2000, the Lord, in His infinite wisdom, took home our dearly loved sister and sister-in-law
ALIDA JONKER
(nee HOOGENDOORN)
in her eighty second year.
"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and there shall be no more death." (Rev.21:4)
Dien & Adzer Hamstra — Groningen, the Neth.
Wim & Vanwy Hoogendoorn — Kingston, Ont.
Herman & Cor Hoogendoorn — Mydrecht, the Neth.
Roel & Elly Hoogendoorn — Westbrook, Ont.
Cora & Bill Brown — Burlington, Ont.
Betty & Rien DeBonte — Mississauga, Ont.
Joanne & Hans Schouls — Hamilton, Ont.

For Rent

Furnished **basement apartment in Dundas, Ont**. Close to bus stop, McMaster and Redeemer.
Phone: **905-627-7971.**

Wedding

The children and grandchildren of
HENNIE STEVENS
and
MARTIN BOONSTRA
are pleased to let you know that their respective parents have committed themselves to each other and plan to get married D.V. on Saturday, September 9, 2000, at 3 o'clock, in the Christian Reformed Church at Drayton, Ont., Pastor G. Bomhof officiating.
Following the ceremony, a reception will be held in the Fellowship Hall of that church.
Correspondence address: 81 Wood St., Apt.33, Drayton, ON N0G 1P0

Larry & Anne Brouwer are happy to announce the marriage of their daughter
ANGELA
to
DENNIS THEODORE SLUYS
son of Ted & Lena Sluys of Greensville, Ontario.
The wedding will take place, D.V., August 26, 2000, at 2 p.m. at the Christian Reformed Church of Drayton, Ontario.
Future address: 69 Greencedar Dr., Hamilton, ON L9C 6W4

Church News

Christian Reformed Church

Address change:
Rev. John Kerssies, from Calgary to: RR 1, Collingwood, ON L9Y 3Y9. Phone 705-446-0070 (home); 705-445-6592 (office).

Celebrating
A Jubilee of Faithfulness
First CRC of Langley, B.C. will celebrate **50 years** in Langley this **Thanksgiving Day weekend** (October 7-9, 2000). A social event (Saturday, Oct. 7) and worship services (Sunday, Oct. 8 and Thanksgiving Day, Oct.9) will highlight the celebration. All friends and former members are invited to join us in celebration. Details are available from the church office: **604-530-5959.**

In praising or loving a child, we love & praise not that which is, but that which we hope for.-*Goethe*

Obituaries

Rotterdam, the Neth. Kingston, Ont.
Jan.13, 1908 - July 22, 2000
It pleased the Lord to take to Himself our beloved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother
ANNA G.A. VOS
Predeceased by her husband Tjeerd (Ted, 1980), her daughter Jetty (1985), and her son Eric (1989)
Lovingly remembered by her children:
Walter & Lorraine Vos — Kingston, Ont.
Sigrid & Stuart Vandermeer — Kingston, Ont.
Ernest & Rosalie Vos — Stittsville, Ont.
and as Oma by her 12 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren whom she loved dearly.
The funeral service and celebration of her life was held on July 26, 2000, at First CRC in Kingston, Ont. and was centred around Isaiah 55.
The grave-side service took place at the Carrying Place cemetery.
"Well done my good and faithful servant: come into your Master's glory and enjoy eternal rest."
Correspondence address:
Walter Vos, 243 Mowat Ave., Kingston, ON K7M 1K6

"Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you! (Psalm 84:4)
Sept.17, 1916 - July 21, 2000
JANNY ZONDERVAN
The Lord has called home His child, our dear mother and grandmother, in her 84th year, who was at the Strathroy General Hospital. She is now reunited in glory with Dad who died on July 29, 1982. Mom will be greatly missed by us, her children:
Charley & Anne Zondervan
Marilyn & George Buesink
Fran & Bill Jongejan
as well as 15 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.
She is survived by her brother Brant Bylsma of Strathroy and sister Jeltje Stoer of the Netherlands. The funeral service was conducted on July 24, 2000, at East CRC, Strathroy, with Pastor Jerry Hoytema officiating.

Church News

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

The date for the fall meeting of Classis BCSE has been changed. We will meet on October 21 & 22, 2000 in the First CRC of Langley, BC. The deadline for the Agenda is August 15, 2000.
Gerrit J. Veeneman, Stated Clerk
Classis BCSE
c/o Trinity CRC
PO Box 2268, Abbotsford, BC
V2T 4X2

PICTURE THIS!
YOU CAN ADVERTISE IN OUR *BUSINESS DIRECTORY* ONCE A MONTH FOR ONLY $25.00 + GST

Investigation finds expulsion of missionaries on the rise in Russia

MOSCOW, Russia (EP) — Are Christian missionaries being expelled from Russia? Yes, says Keston News Service, which conducted an investigation into recent reports that the number of Christian missionaries obstructed from their work or actually deported from Russia is on the rise.

Cases documented by Keston ranged from the mass expulsion of seven American adults and their 11 children, to the obstruction of a public lecture about C.S. Lewis. Many of those deported have not yet learned from officials why their work was cut short.

Hostility toward missionaries

Tolerance towards foreign missionaries has been one of the touchstones of religious freedom in Russia since the lifting of Soviet-era controls. "Much of the hostility towards foreign missionaries comes from local officials whose job was to keep religion in check during the Soviet era," reported Keston's Moscow correspondent Geraldine Fagan. "But behind these officials often stands the FSB, the successor to the KGB, which appear to regard the foreign missionary presence in Russia as a serious threat to state security."

Examples of the cases Keston investigated include that of American Church of Christ missionary David Binkley. Binkley founded a congregation in 1994 in the port of Magadan, but was accused of smuggling by local officials last year. He was eventually cleared of all charges, but a new religious work visa issued in March for him to return to Magadan was suddenly revoked by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow in May. He was later told by the Russian embassy in Washington that entrance to Russia is denied "permanently." He has since been refused entry to Kazakhstan and Ukraine.

Russia's 'Red Belt'

Keston also investigated the case of a Protestant missionary working in one of Russia's "Red Belt" (communist-controlled) regions. The missionary was expelled in 1997 after being summoned to a closed meeting with two FSB agents, who accused him of being in the region fraudulently. The agents demanded names, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, types of visas and names of inviting agencies for every missionary in his organization "so that we can deport them from Russia."

When the missionary pointed out that this could be construed as religious persecution, an FSB officer reportedly replied, "God has nothing to do with this."

Russia could forces out all missionaries

One expelled missionary, church founder Dan Pollard, said he fears that if the current trend continues, Russia will force out all foreign missionaries within the next 10 years. The expulsions could also forecast an overall crackdown on religious freedom in Russia in the near future.

"Increasing restrictions on foreign missionaries are often an indicator of increasing restrictions on religious freedom in general," commented Lawrence Uzzell, director of Keston Institute.

But are Christian missionaries bringing the wrath of the Russian government on themselves? Robert Seiple, the former U.S. Ambassador for International religious Freedom, told *Christianity Today* that some missionary efforts in Russia were like an "assault" on the country.

Insensitivity toward Russian Orthodox Church

Seiple said missionaries had showed extreme insensitivity to the influential Russian Orthodox Church. The church responded by encouraging legislation within Russia earlier this year to curb non-Orthodox churches, missionaries and religious activity. "It is going to take years for the Russian government to amend its laws so that other Christians can go back in," Seiple said.

Keston noted that not all missionaries are encountering problems; some continue to engage in high-profile ministry in Russia without difficulty. However, public outcry over the expulsions has been minimal.

"Many missionaries just keep quiet when they are expelled," Fagan said, "fearing that other projects their missions are undertaking or the activity of the congregations they have been working with will be threatened."

Missionaries robbed on airstrip

GARAINA, Papua New Guinea (EP) — Masked men surrounded an aircraft operated by Missionary Aviation Fellowship (MAF) on July 10 and demanded money from the crew and three passengers. After robbing the crew of their belongings and looting the plane and luggage, the bandits left the Garaina airstrip.

The MAF crew and passengers escaped the incident unhurt and the plane was left undamaged. No arrests related to the incident have been made. Currently, MAF is the only airline — commercial or otherwise — that services remote communities inside Papua New Guinea.

Welcome Students to Christian Reformed Campus Ministries at Canadian Universities

London

In London: The University of Western Ontario, Fanshawe College

At Western:

- Welcome BBQ 5 p.m. Wed., Sept. 6 — with several student ministries, ***Free!*** (call for location)
- Student welcome at First Christian Reformed Church (meeting at Dundas United Church), 482 Dundas St., 9 a.m., Sun., Sept. 10
- Church of Many Doors, on Campus, Alumni-Western Center, open house 3 - 7 p.m. Sun., Sept. 10, open to all students. Introduction at 4 o'clock. Meets every Sunday 4 p.m.
- Inter-Varsity Graduate Student Fellowship

For information: **Campus Minister Michael Veenema 519-438-1242** or **mveenema@julian.uwo.ca**

At Fanshawe:

Weekly student meetings on campus. Contact **Campus Minister Grace Miedema, 519-425-4503.** Friendship and small group ministry too! Welcome.

Queen's University, Kingston

GENEVA FELLOWSHIP

There's room for you at Geneva Fellowship, the CRC campus ministry at Queen's University! Visit our booth at the annual campus sidewalk sale, Sat., Sept. 9, to get a schedule of upcoming events for staff and students — graduate and undergraduate — including our weekly drop-in soup supper.

Every soul needs an address. You can find us at **182 Frontenac St., on the corner with Union St., two blocks west of the Stauffer Library, and at our website:geneva.queensu.ca.**

Brock University, St. Catharines

Brock Campus Ministries warmly welcomes all new and returning students for refreshments at an open house, Sept. 11-15, 12-3 p.m. in the Campus Ministries Centre, DeCew 202. Check out the student Christian Fellowship BBQ, cost suppers, opening of the year prayer service, and fall weekend retreat. For more information, or if you need some help getting settled, stop by campus pastor **Peter Schuurman**'s office or call **905-688-5550 ext. 3134.**

Edmonton

Are you planning to study in Edmonton this coming year? Going to **University of Alberta, NAIT, Grant MacEwan?**

WELCOME! Meet new friends and participate in a cooperative ministry of the Presbyterian and Christian Reformed Churches through such events as:

- Get-Acquainted BBQ, Thursday, Sept. 7, from 5 - 8 p.m. at the Meditation Room in the Students' Union Building.
- Geneva Connection, Fellowship and Reflection, Thursday evenings.
- Other opportunities to reflect on Faith, Life and Study through Bible Studies, Discussion Groups, Retreats and "Bull Sessions" around the Coffee Table in the Chaplains' offices at SUB 158 (main floor, next to elevators).

Any questions? Need help getting settled? Drop by when you're on campus to meet the campus minister, **Tom Oosterhuis**, at SUB 158F; call **780-492-5327 (off.), 780-483-8153 (home) or e-mail toosterh@ualberta.ca**

Waterloo University and Wilfrid Laurier University

HURON CAMPUS MINISTRY AT WATERLOO, Classis Huron

The Church in the Woods, Waterloo Christian Reformed Church is pleased to invite all Waterloo area university and college students, their parents and friends, to a Student Welcome Service,

Sun., Sept. 10, 2000, 10:30 a.m.

After the service, information about Huron Campus Ministry and Grace Christian Fellowship at the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University will be presented and an excellent luncheon provided. Please contact:

Graham E. Morbey at 519-886-1474, 519-884-1970 ext. 2739 or email gmorbey@wlu.ca

Waterloo Christian Reformed Church is located at 209 Bearinger Road.

University of Toronto

Radical Discipleship on Campus!

CRC Campus Ministries at the University of Toronto seeks to challenge, mentor and enable students to think, work and live in radical discipleship to Jesus Christ. Working in partnership with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, we offer a program of Bible studies, worship, seminars, guest lectures and a film series.

- Undergraduates are invited to the first VCF meeting on Wed., Sept. 13 at 6:00 p.m. at the International Student Centre (St. George and College).
- Graduate Christian Fellowship kicks off the year with a "Beginning of the Semester" Party on Thursday Sept. 14 from 7:30 to 10:00 p.m. at the Chaplain's office at Wycliffe College (5 Hoskin Ave).

For more information: **CRC Ministries and Graduate Christian Fellowship Brian Walsh, chaplain (416-596-2439), Geoff Wichert, assistant chaplain (gwichert@chass.utoronto.ca)**

IVCF at U of T, Matt Lindo, matt.lindo@utoronto.ca or the VCF web site: http://come.to/vcf

University of Guelph

Welcome to the University of Guelph. I look forward to meeting you. Please contact me , **Ed Den Haan**, on campus at: **Ph. 2392, Room 315 University Centre** and e-mail **edenhaan@ uoguelph.ca.** I look forward to enriching your education with shared godliness in Christ.

Students coming to:

McMaster University, Hamilton, please contact **Campus Minister Michael Fallon: fallonm@mcmaster.ca**

University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, please contact **Campus Minister Dr. John Valk: Room 10, Alumni Memorial Building, University of New Brunswick, P.O. Box 4400, Fredericton, N.B., E3B 5A3; valk@unb.ca 506-453-5089 (office), 506-459-5962 (home).**

Classifieds

Job Opportunity

Help Wanted: Greenhouse operation in Fenwick, Ont. is looking for **full-time or part-time help** beginning in September. Please call **905-892-2291** for more information.

Miscellaneous

The Living Word
Sermons for reading services.
Contact:
CRC
R. Vander Ploeg, Secr./Treas.
37 Brick Pond Lane
Woodstock, ON N4V 1G1
Phone: (519) 539-2117

Send your anniversary, birthday and other important family notices to:
Christian Courier at fax #: 905-682-8313, or by e-mail to: ccadpromo@aol.com

Job Opportunities

Calvin Theological Seminary

CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

has three tenure-track openings:

Professor of World Missiology
(primary responsibilities in the Master's program)
Deadline for applications is September 29, 2000

Professor of Philosophical and Moral Theology
(primary responsibility in the Ph.D. program)
Deadline for applications is September 29, 2000

Professor of Historical or Systematic Theology
Deadline for applications is October 31, 2000

For a position description, please contact:
Office of the President – Appointments
3233 Burton Street SE
Grand Rapids MI 49546
phone: 616-957-6209
e-mail: kprg@calvin.edu
fax: 616-957-8621

Applicants and nominees must be wholeheartedly committed to the Three Forms of Unity to the Polity of the CRCNA
Calvin Seminary is an equal opportunity employer

CENTENNIAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
TERRACE, B.C.

TEACHING POSITIONS OPEN

Centennial Christian School invites applications to fill a teacher opening in the area of French. This position involves teaching French at the Grade 7-11 level with Grade 12 added the following year. This position may also involve teaching duties in other areas.

Centennial Christian School is an inter-denominational school and presently offers Christian education to approximately 240 students in Kindergarten - Grade 10. **Grade 11 is being added in September 2000, and Grade 12 in September 2001.** This has created new openings as stated above. Please contact the principal or vice-principal for further details and send letter of application, resume and other information to:

Centennial Christian School
Frank Voogd - Principal
Curtis Tuininga - Vice-principal
3608 Sparks St., Terrace BC V8G 2V6
phone: 250-635-6173 fax: 250-635-9385
e-mail:ccs@telus.net

ALL NATIONS CRC IN HALIFAX, N.S.

is looking for **a person to establish a mentoring ministry.** This program seeks to establish supportive relationships between members of the congregation and people in need; 15 hrs./wk. Deadline for applications is October 1, 2000.

Send letters and resumes to:
All Nations CRC
2535 Robie St., Halifax NS B3K 4N3
fax: 902-429-6460
For more info: www.allnationscrc.org

FROM COAST TO COAST

English Radio:
Back to God Hour

Television:
Primary Focus

BRITISH COLUMBIA		
Duncan - CKAY	10:00 am	1500
Burns Lake - CFLO	9:15 am	1400
Osoyoos - CJOR	8:00 am	1490
Penticton - CKOR	8:00 am	800
Port Alberni - CJAV	7:00 pm	1240
Prince George - CIRX	7:00 am	94.3
Princeton - CHOR	8:00 am	1400
Smithers - CFBV	9:15 am	1230
Summerland - CHOR	8:00 am	1450
Vernon - CJIB	9:30 pm	940
ALBERTA		
Brooks - CIBQ	8:00 am	1340
Ft. McMurray-CJOK	8:30 am	1230
High River - CHRB	6:30 pm	1140
Edmonton - CJCA	6:00 pm	930
Westlock - CFOK	7:30 am	1370
SASKATCHEWAN		
Estevan - CJSL	8:00 am	1280
Weyburn - CFSL	8:00 am	1190
MANITOBA		
Altona - CFAM	9:30 am	950
Steinbach - CHSM	8:00 am	1250
Winnipeg - CKJS	9:15 am	810
ONTARIO		
Atikokan - CHAK	9:30 am	1240
Chatham - CFCO	6:30 am	630
Fort Frances - CFOB	9:30 am	640
Guelph - CJOY	8:30 am	1460
Hamilton - CHAM	7:30 am	820
Kapuskasing - CKAP	7:00 am	580
Kingston - WBDR	7:30 am	102.7
London - CKSL	7:00 am	1410
Newmarket - CKDX	9:30 am	88.5
Oshawa - CKDO	8:00 am	1350
Owen Sound -CFOS	10:30 am	560
Pembroke - CHVR	10:00 am	96.7
Sarnia - CHOK	7:30 am	1070
Stratford - CJCS	8:30 am	1240
Windsor - CKLW	7:30 am	800
Wingham - CKNX	10:30 am	920
NEW BRUNSWICK		
Saint John - CHSJ	9:00 am	94.1
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND		
Charlottetown - CFCY	7:00 am	630
NOVA SCOTIA		
Bridgewater -- CKBW	7:30 am	1000
Digby - CKDY	6:00 am	1420
Halifax - CFDR	8:30 am	780
Liverpool -- CKBW	7:30 am	94.5
Kentville - CKEN	8:30 am	1490
Middleton - CKAD	8:30 am	1350
NewGlasgow -CKEC	7:30 am	1320
Shelburne -- CKBW	7:30 am	93.1
Sydney - CJCB	7:00 am	1270
Weymouth - CKDY	8:30 am	103.1

ALBERTA
Lethbridge - CJIL
Thursday - 9:00 pm
Saturday - 12:00 noon

ONTARIO - CTS
Tuesday - 10:00 am

Check your local listings for cable outlets airing *Primary Focus*.

Saturdays:
PACIFIC -- BC .... 10 pm
MOUNTAIN -- AB .. 11 pm
CENTRAL -- SK. & MB ..... 9 pm
EASTERN -- ON & PQ ..... 10 pm
ATLANTIC – NFLD, NB, NS, & PEI ... 11 pm

3475 Mainway
PO Box 5070
Station LCD1
Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8

THE BACK TO GOD HOUR

Miscellaneous

Your funds will be invested in Christian Reformed Church and Christian school building projects in Canada.

CRC EXTENSION FUND

"... Serving Christian Reformed churches and Christian schools since 1970"

RATES TO SEPT. 30, 2000:

Ext. Fund:	5.75 %
RRSP:	5.85 % (approx.)
Call:	416-461-1207
Write:	Christian Reformed Extension Fund 45 Harriet St., Toronto, ON M4L 2G1
Fax:	416-465-6367

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Commerce Place, 1 King St. West
Mail: PO Box 907, Hamilton, ON L8N 3P6
Phone: 905-526-9800 Fax 905-526-0732
Email: dvanderwoerd@rossmcbride.com

Direct Dial: 905-572-5803

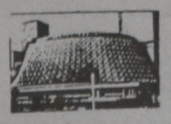
Events/Classifieds

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is $7.50 per line, or $1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

Aug. 27	Dutch service, 3 p.m., Ancaster CRC, Hwy. 53, **Ancaster,** Ont. - Rev. Kuntz preaching. (#)
Aug. 27	Teen Challenge Outreach Team, Rosedale Baptist Church, 11 Rosedale Place, **Welland**, Ont. 11 am.
Sep. 2-3	**Cochrane,** Ont. CRC, 50th Anniversary celebration.(For info see ad in July 10 issue of CC.) (#)
Sep. 16	"Life After Carismania," free seminar with Ted Brooks, Fantasyland Hotel - Conference Centre, **West Edmonton Mall**. For info call Victoria Life Church, Westlock Alta. 1-800-816-8378. (#)
Sept. 17	A Special 50th Anniversary Worship, 10 a.m., First CRC, **Toronto,** Ont.. For more information of Anniversary celebrations, call 416-481-4912. (#)
Oct. 1	Dutch service, 3 p.m., Ancaster CRC, Hwy. 53, **Ancaster,** Ont. - Rev. J. Hoytema preaching. (#)
Oct. 7-8	Thanksgiving weekend 50th Anniversary celebrations, First CRC, **Toronto,** Ont. For more information, call 416-481-4912. (#)
Oct. 7-8	First CRC of **Barrie,** Ont. 50th Anniversary celebrations. Thanksgiving dinner and program on Saturday, Services at 10:30 a.m. & 7 p.m. on Sunday. For more info, call 705-734-9166. (#)
Oct. 7-9	Thanksgiving weekend 50th Anniversary celebrations, First CRC of **Rocky Mountain House,** Alta. For more information, call 403-845-6067. (#)
Oct. 9-15	First CRC of **Abbotsford,** B.C. 50th Anniversary Celebrations. Call 604-859-5908(ad July 10 issue)(#)
Oct. 11	The First CRC of Ladner B.C. - 50th Anniversary Service - 8 p.m., **Delta,** B.C.
Oct. 28-29	First CRC of **Kingston,** Ont. 50th Anniversary Celebrations. (See ad in this issue). (#)
Nov. 3	Christian Festival Concert under the direction of Leendert Kooij, Roy Thomson Hall, **Toronto.** $25/$20/$15 Call 416-636-9779. (See ad in July 24 issue of CC.) (#)
Nov. 11-12	First CRC of **Lethbridge,** Alta. 50th Anniversary celebrations. Call Anne Bosma at 403-328-9985 for more info. (#)
Nov. 17	First CRC of **Thunder Bay,** Ont. - 50th Anniversary celebration dinner and program. For dinner reservations or more information, call Audrey Grootenboer at 807-935-2778. (#)

Christian Festival Concert 2000



Roy Thomson Hall
Friday, November 3
@ 7:30 p.m.
by the
Ontario Christian Music Assembly
with special guests
Maya Roodveldt, soprano & Ruud Fiselier, tenor NEW
Dirk Out & Andre Knevel, organ & piano
under the direction of
Leendert Kooij
Tickets $25.00 / $20.00 / $15.00
Order from: Ontario Christian Music Assembly
90 Topcliff Ave., Downsview, ON M3N 1L8
Call (416)636-9779 for tickets or info.

Celebrating 50 Years!
First Christian Reformed Church of Kingston, Ontario
will be celebrating, the Lord willing, its
50TH ANNIVERSARY
October 28 and 29, 2000.

All former members and friends of the congregation are invited. Celebrations begin with an Open House on Saturday, October 28th from 1-3 p.m. in the church.

A Dinner will be held at 5:30 p.m. at the Day's Inn followed by a program reflecting on the past 50 years and God's faithfulness to us.

A special service involving former Pastors will be held on Sunday, October 29th at 10 a.m. in the church.

For dinner reservations or more information please contact: the church secretary, Sylvia Bouma, phone: 613-542-8350; e-mail: 1stcrc@kos.net or Hetty VanDasselaar (evenings) phone: 613-384-1966; e-mail: hvan@kingston.net

"WINTER BREAK"
COSTA DEL SOL, SPAIN
with Henny Vuyk

Spend a wonderful 3 or 6 weeks in the beautiful Costa Del Sol, Spain. Enjoy your winter break in Benalmadena Costa (near Fuengirola). Henny & Jan Vuyk will be there as hosts.

We offer three options:

- Depart Feb. 13 - stay for 3 weeks - $1421.– pp
- Depart Feb. 13 - stay for 6 weeks - $2033.– pp
- Depart Mar. 7 - stay for 3 weeks - $1421.– pp

Price includes: airfare with Canada 3000, fully-equipped one bdrm. apt. at Flatotel & transfers. (Tax & Insurance are extra.)

HURRY! SPACE IS VERY LIMITED. CALL HENNY

VERSTRAETE TRAVEL & CRUISES
36 Secord Dr., St. Catharines ON L2N 1K8
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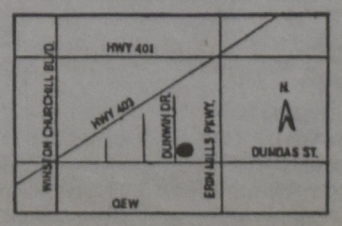

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News

ReStores recycle building materials

ALAN DOERKSEN PHOTOS

Habitat for Humanity volunteers work on the "blitz build" of new semi-detached homes in St. Catharines, Ont.

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — Habitat for Humanity, well-known for building homes for and with people who otherwise couldn't afford it, has been building a new project across Canada: ReStores. Already, Habitat has a chain of 15 ReStores in Canada, which sell donated, used or recycled building materials.

One of the newest ReStores, in St. Catharines, Ont., had its grand opening June 24. The local ReStore's co-ordinator, Debbie Chagnon, says, "We were the 13th store in Canada," and two more have opened since then. "We recycle new and used building materials. We save a lot from going to landfill," she explains. Materials such as doors and windows are not picked up with local garbage, so people often pay to have them trucked to a landfill site.

The store is a retailer, a "thrift shop," and an "all-around hardware store," says Chagnon.

For the most part, the ReStore offers supplies for home renovating, including doors, windows, wallpaper and carpeting. Used items are priced at 25 to 33 per cent of their retail value, while new items, which are mostly donated by local companies, are 50 per cent of their regular price.

Since its grand opening, the St. Catharines ReStore has gotten "a lot busier," says Chagnon. Several companies have already made significant donations of goods to the store. Your Home Decor, a store in nearby Welland that recently went out of business, donated all of its end stock to the ReStore. This included wallpaper, borders and curtain rods.

$500,000 donation

Bigger companies such as Home Depot are also helping Canada's ReStores. "Home Depot is our largest supplier," says Chagnon. Last year alone, Home Depot donated $500,000 worth of goods to ReStores across Canada. Such donations "allow them to clear out their warehouses," she says.

Most of the staff of the St. Catharines ReStore are volunteers. "We need volunteers to make this work," she emphasizes. "All our proceeds go to Habitat for Humanity projects."

'Blitz-building'

This month, Habitat has been "blitz-building" two semi-detached homes in St. Catharines. After the foundation was laid, an intensive "blitz build" took place from August 7 to 12, during which most of the structure was set up (see above photos).

This project was unusual, says Chagnon, because most Habitat homes are detached. Habitat welcomes volunteers to make a long-term commitment to work at its ReStores or a short-term commitment to work on a new building project. In the Niagara Region, interested people can call the local ReStore at 905-685-7395 for more details.

Habitat for Humanity Niagara has the main goal "to build houses with families who otherwise couldn't afford to own their own homes," Ruth Braun, chair of the regional branch, told the St. Catharines *Standard* recently. Families requesting Habitat homes must put in 500 "sweat hours" in construction of their homes, she pointed out.

The new St. Catharines homes will be dedicated on Sept. 16, which is "a very significant weekend," Braun told *Christian Courier*. "The 100,000th [Habitat] home is going to be dedicated that day," in New York City. Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter is taking part in that building project, says Braun. "We are going to be doing the finishing touches that week" on the St. Catharines homes, she reported.

Loreto hosts World Congress on Immigration and Integration

ROME (ZENIT.org) — The Third Meeting on Immigration and Integration, which this year is entitled "Europe, Past and Future," was held in Loreto from July 23-29. More than 70 government ministers, politicians, and social agents took part in more than 60 hours of conferences, round tables, and events. An estimated 15,000 persons participated.

Finding a way to integrate people

The meeting was organized by the St. Charles Missionaries, whose charism is the care of immigrants. With this initiative, they hope to go beyond figures and statistics that describe the phenomenon of immigration, and find a real way to integrate persons of different cultures.

The event's 'godmother'

Edith Stein is the "godmother" of this event. This Jewish philosopher studied with Edmund Husserl, becoming one of the greatest philosophers of the first half of the 20th century. After converting to Catholicism, she became a Carmelite nun. She and her sister were killed in an Auschwitz gas chamber by the Nazis. She has been declared a saint, and one of six co-patrons of Europe. She has thus become a new reason for hope among those who, like her, are forced to leave their homes.

The Loreto meeting took place at a time when the European Union and other countries are discussing targets for promoting integration (i.e. controlling new immigration currents).

Greater sensitizing needed

Ghi Serafen Ielemon, a director of the "No Place Is Far Away" Association, who is attending the meeting, told ZENIT, "I think what is needed is greater sensitizing of public opinion and greater responsibility on the part of political institutions. It is often said that European countries need immigrants. All right, but these immigrants must be integrated through a cultural and productive process. They must be considered citizens with full rights and all the guarantees proper to the human being. I think this is the greatest challenge Europe and its democracy face in the 21st century — to recognize immigrants' dignity."

Giovanni Conso, President Emeritus of the Italian Constitutional Court, believes that in order to respond to this challenge, appropriate structures must be established so that the welcome is genuine. "Culture develops slowly; it is not born overnight. Careful thought must be given to various aspects: economic, labor, retirement, respect for legality on the part of immigrants, and entry that is neither superficial nor precipitous, but coupled with genuine welcome. I think that little by little everyone will understand that progress can only be made by the road of conciliation."

News Digest

Airline passengers hear heavenly music

(Religion Today) — Airline passengers are feeling closer to God — but not because they're flying above the clouds. Christian contemporary music was available through headphones during Delta Airlines flights for two months this spring, *The Lutheran* magazine reported. The two-hour program featured top artists.

Feedback "has been very positive from our customers," said John Kennedy, a Delta spokesman. The music was part of the programming with many other channels, he said. Christian music is "making an incredible impact in the marketplace," said Frank Breeden of the Gospel Music Association, which co-sponsored the program.

Hitchhiking killer bees

LOW MOOR, Virginia — In July, a swarm of bees in Virginia killed a goat and sent four people to hospital. Researchers believe that the bees hopped onto a train or truck from Texas or the American southwest and ended up in Low Moor, Va., where they commandeered a local beehive and then angrily defended it, reports the *Washington Post*.

Baby drop-off at convent

MUNICH, Germany (Religion Today) — A convent in Munich, Germany, provides a hatch through which mothers can place their unwanted babies. A bell alerts the sisters on the inside. Mothers can leave proof of their identity on a fingerprint pad on the outside in case they want to reclaim their child, according to the *Daily Telegraph*. The child is put up for adoption if the mother does not return in eight weeks.

The arrangement, run by the Sisters of Our Lady of the Love of the Good Shepherd, revived a practice from the 15th century. It is similar to others operating in Hamburg, Hungary, and South Africa.